

# **Ways of Seeing, Knowing and Gathering: Taking Art Out of the Classroom**

Exploring the scope for art education in the expanded field to benefit the  
transformative process of higher education

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# DECLARATION

By submitting this thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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## ABSTRACT

The tensions I experienced as a Stellenbosch University student made me curious to delve into potential exchanges between the boundaries of worthwhile art and valid education. I explored the capacity of interactive artworks to contribute to realising the university's institutional vision. This research venture seeks to inspire innovative approaches to education that can potentially decrease discrepancies between institutional policy and practice. The primary question examines the nature and effect of students' responses to an interactive artwork placed on the Stellenbosch University campus. These reactions subtly exposed the particularity of the Stellenbosch University context and indicated aspects of art education in the expanded field that could aid higher education institutions in fulfilling their transformative role.

An anti-colonial paradigm guided me through a crucial attentiveness of the power issues embedded in knowledge production, validation and dissemination. The reflexive process of qualitative research permitted a captivating interdisciplinary landscape that spans from policy documents to philosophical enquiries. I studied the lived experiences of students, lecturers and staff members at Stellenbosch University through individual and group interviews. A case study research design was employed to use the patterns picked up in these single cases to lead me toward more entrenched underlying issues and attitudes. Nuanced research findings were the result of the anti-colonial prism that caused me to place equal value on difference and coherence in my enquiry.

Visual metaphors such as my interactive public artwork translate philosophical ideas into practice and communicate these ideas right to the heart. This is how art can bridge the divide between in- and out-of-class education and aid the university in preparing students to become purposeful citizens. Not only does this project signify the university's institutional transformation, but it also adds to the transformative impact of the university on all its stakeholders; a necessary process that enables greater social impact. Belonging is a crucial aspect in this regard, because it enables students to internalise the knowledge acquired through higher education. And one of the key underlying messages of higher education is that graduates are citizens that should contribute their skills and knowledge to positively enhance society.

The interview feedback revealed that the artwork was successful in guiding students' thoughts and conversations to form new knowledge because it was an honest space where people could articulate their opinions. Interdisciplinary learning is a powerful tool that enriches curricula and increases the impact of university education. The university needs to allow students to belong and then develop responsibility and empathy toward societal needs, and it appears that the artwork roused some of these sentiments. In order to become an institution that launches the thought leaders of the future, Stellenbosch University needs to harness all collaborators that collectively contribute to an integrated understanding of life and an expanded appreciation of knowledge.

## OPSOMMING

Die spanning wat ek as 'n Stellenbosch Universiteit's student ervaar het, het my nuuskierig gemaak om dieper in die moontlike wisselwerking tussen die grense van betekenisvolle kuns en ware opvoeding te delf. Tydens my studie het ek die vermoë van interaktiewe kunswerke om tot die verwesenliking van die universiteit se institusionele visie by te dra, ondersoek. Hierdie navorsing poog om innoverende benaderings tot opvoeding te soek wat die gapings tussen institusionele beleid en praktyk potensieel kan verminder. Die primêre vraag analiseer die aard en effek van studente se reaksies op 'n interaktiewe kunswerk wat op die kampus van die Stellenbosch Universiteit geplaas was. Hierdie reaksies het die besonderse konteks van die Stellenbosch Universiteit blootgestel. Hierdeur is aspekte van kunsonderrig in die uitgebreide veld aangedui, wat moontlik hoër onderwys institute in hulle transformatiewe rol behulpzaam kan wees.

'n Anti-koloniale paradigma het my deur 'n kritieke bewustheid van die magsstryd waarin kennisvorming, geldigheid en verspreiding gewikkel is, begelei. Die terugskouende proses van kwalitatiewe navorsing het 'n fassinerende interdisiplinêre landskap toegelaat wat strek vanaf beleidsdokumente tot filosofiese ondersoeke. Die ervaring van die studente, lektore en personeel van die Stellenbosch Universiteit is deur onderhoudsvoering met individue en groepe bestudeer. 'n Gevallestudie navorsingsontwerp is gebruik om patrone in hierdie enkel gevalle in te span om versteekte onderliggende vraagstukke te ontbloot. Genuanseerde navorsings bevindings is na vore gebring deur anti-koloniale prisma wat my gelei het om gelyke waarde op beide verskille en ooreenkomste te plaas.

Visuele metafore, soos my interaktiewe publieke kunswerk, het filosofiese idees in praktyk oorgeplaas. Dit is hoe hierdie idees reguit na die hart van die deelnemer spreek. Kuns kan so die skeiding tussen binne- en buite-klastyd onderrig oorbrug en die universiteit ondersteun in hul poging om studente as doelgerigte landsburgers voor te berei. Hierdie projek dui terselfdetyd op die universiteit se institusionele transformasie nie en op die transformatiewe impak van die universiteit op al sy belangegroepe. Om aan 'n groep te behoort 'n belangrike aspek omdat dit studente in staat stel om die kennis, wat hulle deur hoër onderwys verkry het, te internaliseer. Dit sluit by een van die onderliggende sleutelboodskappe van hoër onderwys aan naamlik dat graduandi

landsburgers is wat hulle vaardighede en kennis tot positiewe uitbouing van die samelewing moet aanwend.

Die terugvoer van die onderhoude weerspieël dat die kunswerk suksesvol was in die begeleiding van studente se gedagtes en gesprekke, om nuwe kennis te vorm. Dit is moontlik gemaak deur die eerlike spasie waarin die mense opinies kon lig. Inter-dissiplinêre kennisverryking is 'n kragtige werktuig wat kurrikulums versterk en wat die impak van universiteitsonderrig verbreed. Die universiteit behoort studente te laat voel asof hulle behoort en om verantwoordelikheid en empatie vir die samelewing se behoeftes by hulle te kweek. Dit blyk dat hierdie kunswerk sekere van daardie sentimente na die oppervlak gebring het. Vir Stellenbosch Universiteit om a instelling te word wat denkleiers van die toekoms vorm, verg dat al die deelnemers wat kollektief bydra tot 'n geïntegreerde verstaan van die lewe uitbrie op die waardering van kennis.

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# CHAPTER 1

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## ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

### Introduction to the Research

During my first four years as a student at Stellenbosch University, I have experienced two domains where I felt suspended between disparate positions. In terms of education I was swayed between the institutional vision and strategy and the average students' perceptions of university. Moreover, I found myself in a liminal space between culturally superior forms of art and the artistic capacity to bring about relationships, conversations and transformation. It is this tension that stimulated a courageous curiosity in me to explore and expose possible interactions between education, non-education, art and non-art. The expanded field allows me to reposition these lucid modernist terms with indefinite elasticity (Krauss 1979:30). An expanded understanding of Art Education enables exploration into the impact that can be achieved outside the traditional parameters of the field.

### Background

This explorative case study investigates students' reactions to and interpretations of an interactive public artwork that was set up on the Stellenbosch University campus in celebration of *Twenty Years of Freedom and Democracy* on campus. I endeavoured to conduct a study particular to this context, cognisant of the deeply rooted colonial history of the region. I am a white, middle-class, Afrikaans speaking South African of Dutch descent. I am aware of the fact that this position has afforded me certain occasions of power and privilege in the context of education in South Africa. I approach topics such as tolerance, diversity, human rights, citizenship and social justice with the utmost delicacy, fully understanding that I grew up without a need to rely on these concepts. The only aspects that entitle me to conduct this research are my willingness to learn, desire towards human

reconciliation and my profound hope for this country. For this reason, I found the anti-colonial perspective best suited for my research project.

The perpetuation of colonialism<sup>1</sup> through globalisation (Abdi, Puplampu & Sefa Dei 2006:4) over and above the trans-historical relevance of colonialism (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:130-131) are two of the fundamental assumptions of anti-colonial<sup>2</sup> thought. The anti-colonial prism, through which this study is conducted, calls for a critical awareness of the power issues embedded in knowledge production, validation and dissemination so as to challenge social oppression (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:3). The government expects higher education institutions in South Africa to take up a leadership role in changing the social climate, laying emphasis on frank and authentic debate in the areas of tension (Higher Education South Africa 2010:2-7). My research case study is conducted at Stellenbosch University, an institution that publicly positions itself as an educational institution that produces the thought leaders of the future (Stellenbosch University 2013:17). Stellenbosch University aims to release alumni equipped to enrich South Africa through their innovative and courageous solutions and inclusive recognition of all stakeholders (Stellenbosch University 2013:17).

## Problem Statement

Stellenbosch University's well verbalised objectives mentioned above requires of students and lecturers to partner with an expanded understanding of education and learning. Unless students are willing to redefine the meaning of their heritage and South African identity, the prospect of more students embodying the university vision is improbable. The university principally determines to impact students' citizenship disposition so that these

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<sup>1</sup> Colonialism reinforces exclusive notions of difference, superiority and belonging, establishing resilient "hierarchies and systems of power" that maintain the dominant sense of authority, control and reason (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:3).

<sup>2</sup> Anti-colonial theory is defined as "an approach to theorizing the colonial and re-colonial relations" and the effect of imperial structures on "knowledge production and validation, the understanding of indigeneity and the pursuit of agency, resistance and subjective politics" (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:2).

students can best utilise their knowledge to the greater benefit of their community<sup>3</sup>. This research venture seeks to inspire new ways of thinking about education that can potentially contribute to bridging the gap between institutional policy and practice at Stellenbosch University.

## Aim, Research Questions and Objectives of this Research

### ***The aim of the research is:***

The aim of this study is to determine how interactive educational artworks could contribute to realising the university's institutional vision and transformational mandate.

### ***In this study my primary question is:***

What was the nature and effect of students' responses to the interactive artwork placed on Stellenbosch University campus?

### ***The sub-questions are:***

What do these responses communicate about the particularity of the Stellenbosch University context?

How can art education in the expanded field<sup>4</sup> aid higher education institutions in fulfilling their transformative<sup>5</sup> role?

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<sup>3</sup>I work with M. S. Peck's (18987) understanding of community in this thesis. Community refers to a group of people that share geographic vicinity (Peck 1987:21), that have differing opinions with the freedom to express these (Peck 1987:65). Communities are built upon humility, love, and servitude and result in a more lively and intense joy in life (Peck 1987:65).

<sup>4</sup>The concept 'the expanded field' will be discussed in Chapter 2, p. 25.

<sup>5</sup>The transformative role refers to the changes that a university education should bring about in the lives and minds of its students (Harvey & Knight 1996:156).

***The objectives are:***

To identify the reactions of students to the interactive artwork that I placed on Stellenbosch University campus; and

To establish what the reactions revealed about the particularity of the Stellenbosch University context, the potential of art in the expanded field and students' perceptions of citizenship<sup>6</sup> in South Africa.

## Overview of the Research Methodology

The reflexive process of qualitative research allowed me to navigate through a fascinating interdisciplinary landscape where knowledge creation takes many forms (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006:5). Through the interpretative paradigm, I studied the social connotations that individuals assign to their exchanges (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006:14). I employed the case study research design which is most applicable in exploratory knowledge creation where a single case is placed in an expansive framework or context (De Vos, Delport, Fouché, & Strydom 2011:321-322). The anti-colonial prism places equal value on difference and coherence, both between as well as within subjects (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:8). The extraction of such complex sets of information is best done through interviews, considering that the interview process is sensitive to nuanced responses. These interviews were allocated through non-purposive judgement sampling and analysed by means of an inductive content analysis. This method is regarded as a "creative reasoning mode" because it leans more toward opening up possibilities and questions rather than reaching finite conclusions (De Vos *et al.* 2011:49). This enabled me to notice patterns in responses that may indicate that more general principles are prevailing (Babbie 2010:56). In order to secure the validity and truthfulness of the information, I created an expansive and inclusive interview environment and employed triangulation as a method of trustworthiness.

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<sup>6</sup>A definition of 'citizenship' will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3, p. 30-31.

## Boundaries and Limitations of the Study

An inconclusive inductive reasoning process can often become cluttered by a wealth of valuable information and possible deviations. For this reason, it is important that clear boundaries are stipulated in order to maintain the validity and trustworthiness of the study (De Vos *et al.* 2011:111). Firstly, because of the timing of the *Twenty Years of Freedom and Democracy* celebrations on campus<sup>7</sup> a week before examinations, I was unable to conduct my interviews during or directly after the artwork was installed. Furthermore, due to the nature of case study research, the research findings cannot be generalised for policy use, but could merely serve as an inspiration toward new modes of thinking. My bias as researcher could potentially influence the honesty and individuality of participant contributions, which is a potential risk that I am aware of.

Because I focused on coherence and necessary contextualisation, there are several fields in this thesis that could have been elaborated on. Such fields include South African political history, democracy, other contexts of art beside relational aesthetics and the socio-political position of Stellenbosch University. It is important to bear in mind that this is a mini thesis in the specific research context of art education, and that although I include a wide variety of literature, the main aims of the study are not sociological, anthropological nor politically inclined.

## Structure of the Thesis

There are vast options in terms of how academic theses could be organised. The structure that I use is specifically designed for case study research in the domain of Arts and Social Sciences. This structure consists of a contextual framework in Chapter Two, a discussion of theoretical perspectives in Chapter Three, and a characterisation of the research design

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<sup>7</sup>12- 16 May 2014, as predetermined by the *Centre for Inclusivity*.

and methodology in Chapter Four. A discussion of the research findings is in Chapter Five, followed by the Conclusions and Implications in Chapter 6.



# CHAPTER 2

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## CONTEXTUALISING THE STUDY

The broad paradigm in which research is conducted is of pivotal importance to the reading of that research; it is the framework that shapes both what the researcher observes and how it is interpreted (Babbie 2007:31-32). In this chapter I concisely introduce the reader to colonial and post-colonial Africa, leading into the anti-colonial prism through which my research is conducted. I then refer more specifically to the South African climate of transformation in education, highlighting specific policy documents and broad national aims. Stellenbosch and Stellenbosch University are situated in a colonial historical context, the backdrop against which transformation at Stellenbosch University is placed. Historicism and circumstance are the lens that normalises and triggers elastic understandings of art and education in the context of institutional transformation at Stellenbosch University.

### From an African Perspective and an Anti-colonial Frame of Reference

It is fundamentally important to frame higher education in South Africa in its broader African context. Africa, prior to the onset of colonialism, was described as “peaceful, socially harmonious”, responsive to growing human needs and adaptable to the changing physical environment (Abdi, Puplampu & Sefa Dei 2006:14). Though I am cautious to homogenise my entire continent under one description, it appears that pre-colonial education was “more pragmatic and more associated with the life of the African people” (Abdi *et al.* 2006:14). The main goals of colonialism were not to generate long-term benefits for the larger African society, given it was economic adventure as opposed to a charity undertaking (Abdi *et al.* 2006:4). Nevertheless, credit has to be given to the colonial project for the foundation of universities in many African countries, which started as derivatives of the European universities these institutions were modelled after (Abdi *et*

*al.* 2006:5). There are considerable continuities between the colonial and postcolonial<sup>8</sup> periods if these are considered merely epochs (Abdi *et al.* 2006:4). Consequently, globalisation is currently regarded as a continuation of “the historical process of imperial control” presenting meagre possibilities for substantial growth in Africa (Abdi *et al.* 2006:4).

I position this study in the broad context of anti-colonial theory. This perspective promotes a critical awareness of the normative power struggles embedded in educational practice, and challenges educators to reconsider the locations of knowledge (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:3). Such responsiveness is particularly relevant in African higher education, because the knowledge generated by these institutions meaningfully addresses societal needs (Abdi *et al.* 2006:31). Colonialism is any form of “imposition and domination” in keeping with anti-colonial theory (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:2). The current phase of colonialism in education manifests in knowledge and identity validation (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:2).

Knowledge about the past is necessary so as to understand and learn from earlier periods (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:1). Thus, decolonisation of the colonised involves reclaiming the past, especially aspects that were previously excluded from historical records (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:1). History itself is regarded by anti-colonial theorists as “neither static nor fixed”, but rather as the sum of personal experiences” resulting from the “subjective construction” of individual and group memory (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:129). The colonial encounter is therefore regarded as “trans-historical rather than historical”, because the “historical events exist in trans-historical contexts and can have trans-historical relevance” (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:130-131). The anti-colonial prism addresses the persistent impact of colonialism on “the nature and extent of social domination” and, more specifically, the reinforcement of dominant-subordinate relations of power (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:2). Anti-colonial scholars work to “challenge Eurocentric discourses” with new insights and to enable indigenous “intellectual and political emancipation” (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:2).

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<sup>8</sup>The rhetoric of the postcolonial in Africa has been circulating for almost fifty years (Abdi *et al.* 2006:17) with its strength still embedded in its capacity to deconstruct the complexities and tensions of colonialism in its aftermath (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:13).

## The South African Educational Climate

With a colonial history similar to many other African countries, indigenous South Africans were met by the Dutch East India Company (VOC) in 1652, later by the British settlers in 1795 and then by the French Huguenots (Giliomee 2003:17). The period of colonialism was followed by institutionalised racism and segregation imposed by white minority (of British and Dutch descent) on the black majority (of indigenous descent). The National Party instituted Apartheid between 1948 and 1978 with separate development policies leading to unequal educational opportunities and a deeply divided society. Without delving too deep into Apartheid politics and specifics, I situate this study in the transformational educational context that has been circulating in post-Apartheid South Africa for the past twenty years. Needless to say, the magnitude of the transformational endeavour South Africa embarked on after Apartheid makes it tremendously complex (Ramphela 2008:14). Simultaneously taking on political, social, structural and economic transformation with immediate effect requires a metamorphosis of epic proportions (Ramphela 2008:13). Although initial changes were implemented at the onset of the first democratic elections in 1994, the process of transformation in South Africa is still on-going. The country keeps on reorienting itself from its prior practices and values “defined by racism, sexism, inequality and lack of respect for human rights towards the values reflected in our national constitution” (Ramphela 2008:13). This is done with the aim to create platforms where the “roots of civic-mindedness” can be embedded into the consciousness of the nation<sup>9</sup> (Ramphela 2008:13-14).

Education in South Africa has also been transforming in relation to the national metamorphosis. Let us look at the earliest post-Apartheid documents and the consequent ministerial investigation on racism in higher education. The first *White Paper on Education and Training*<sup>10</sup> (1995:5) placed education central in terms of national, social and

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<sup>9</sup>Ramphela refers to public service, community interaction and interpersonal relationships as the consciousness of the nation (Ramphela 2008:14).

<sup>10</sup>The goal of this document was a principled national agreement on education in order to enable development, widen access and raise quality (Department of Education 1995:5).

governmental concerns. This document challenged all role players in the education sector to contribute to “a system which cultivates and liberates the talents of all our people without exception”; a system founded upon non-discrimination, diversity, excellence, resourcefulness and ownership (Department of Education 1995:5). The Department of Education (1995:15) promoted an understanding of learning that rejects the rigid divisions between “academic” and “applied”, “theory” and “practice”, “knowledge” and “skills”, and “head” and “hand”; learning that strives toward cultivating in students’ citizenship, lifelong learning desires, flexibility, responsibility and co-operation. With the publishing of *White Paper 3*,<sup>11</sup> the Ministry of Education (1997:1-3) realised that educational transformation is infinitely complex and requires serious collective consensus and reinterpretation of the past. The transformation of education cannot be separated from the encompassing process of “political democratisation, economic reconstruction” and “redistributive social policies” (Ministry of Education 1997:5). Moreover, higher education institutions played a central role in facilitating this comprehensive national process.

In March 2008, the then minister of Education, Naledi Pandor, established a committee to investigate discrimination in public Higher Education Institutions, specifically focussing on racism in university residences (Soudien, Michaels, Mthembi-Mahanyele, Nkomo, Nyanda, Nyoka, Seepe, Shisana & Villa-Vicencio 2008:6). Soudien *et al.* (2008:6) found the challenge to be how “the instruments of our democracy” could be used to endorse the modalities of human and socio-economic rights. The apparent disjuncture between policies and lived experience is credited to the poor distribution of policy awareness, and “a lack of institutional will” (Soudien *et al.* 2008:14). Following this ministerial investigation into racism, containing best practices to eradicate racism and advice on further strategies, Higher Education South Africa (HESA) (2010) published a Section Position Paper<sup>12</sup> on the investigation and findings of the report. There is a general consensus that higher education institutions need to provide leadership in changing the social climate, despite the fact that these institutions reflect the attitudes of the broader society (HESA 2010:7).

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<sup>11</sup>This document specifically focused on transformation in higher education.

<sup>12</sup>This document analyses the institutional responses to the report and critically engages with the report (Higher Education South Africa 2010:4).

HESA (2010:2) stresses a pressing need for “a climate of honest and open debate that can lead to a greater understanding of mutuality within institutions” in facilitating thorough transformation<sup>13</sup>. This focused, albeit volatile, context of transformation in higher education is the milieu where my research was conducted.

## Stellenbosch Context: Historical Overview

The case of Stellenbosch is particularly relevant within the overarching discourse of transformation in South Africa. Although initially inhabited by San and Kho-Khoi, Stellenbosch was brought under the control of the Dutch by commander Simon van der Stel in 1679, marking the beginning of racial conflict and tensions starting with slavery<sup>14</sup> (Giliomee 2007:1). At the time, Stellenbosch was regarded the epitome of Afrikaner nationalism, religion and moral values (Giliomee 2003:54). The watershed racial battle known as the Battle of Andringa Street erupted in Stellenbosch in 1939 between the coloured community and white university students (Giliomee 2007:157). This battle is deemed a predecessor of structural violence, forced removals and racial discrimination; the backdrop against which Apartheid was implemented in 1948 (Giliomee 2007:172). In contrast to this volatile history<sup>15</sup>, Stellenbosch is popularly regarded as a university town, a tourist destination famous for its wine routes, beautiful historical buildings and romantic traces a colonial past. Stellenbosch University itself was founded in the 1850's and served as both a theological seminary and institute of citizenship education (Giliomee 2003:51). Initially a British institution, named Victoria College, Stellenbosch University gradually progressed to a fully functioning Afrikaans university from 1918 onwards (Giliomee 2003:24). With this study, I set out to explore how students responded to the interactive artwork I placed on campus and what these responses express about the particularity of the Stellenbosch University context.

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<sup>13</sup>Thorough transformation refers to more than policy implementation, including both formal processes of education as well as everyday practices such as traditions, customs, habits and symbols (HESA 2010:2).

<sup>14</sup>Racial tensions were furthered by the century of British rule (which started in 1789) (Giliomee 2007:23).

<sup>15</sup>No perspective is complete or neutral (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:131). The purpose and viewpoint from which I convey my telling of history is of utmost relevance so that I do not “fall prey to the Eurocentric claim of objectivity and its corresponding mask of universality” (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:131).

## Current Positioning of Stellenbosch University

Stellenbosch University exists in a particularly complicated tension. It formerly played a key role in Apartheid policy formation and Afrikaner nationalism, but is now trying to establish itself as a transformative, diverse agent of change and visionary leadership in a democratic new South Africa. The university's response to the Ministerial Report on racism (Soudien *et al.* 2008) exposes the university's deliberate obligation to eradicate past injustices, create an equitable institutional culture, constantly practice "critical self-renewal", broaden access and implement overall institutional redress (Stellenbosch University 2008:iii). Stellenbosch University expressed its commitment to adding value to the knowledge industry and building the democratic culture in academic, social, cultural and equity dimensions (Stellenbosch University 2008:2). Building on these aims, the late rector of Stellenbosch University, Professor Russell Botman released his *Vision 2030* as well as *Institutional Intent and Strategy 2013-2018* in 2013. The vision states that Stellenbosch University determines to be an "inclusive, innovative and future focused" institution; "a place of discovery and excellence where both staff and students are thought leaders in advancing knowledge in the service of all stakeholders" (Stellenbosch University 2013:16). The immediate steps toward this vision are founded upon thorough transformation that is driven by success instead of necessity (Stellenbosch University 2013:10). The strategic areas wherein this transformation takes place are broadening access, sustaining the momentum on excellence and enhancing the societal impact (Stellenbosch University 2013:15). I particularly drew on these elements of transformation, accessibility and social impact when I formulated my research aim to explore how interactive educational artworks could contribute to the university's transformational mandate toward socially just education.

## Teaching and Learning at Stellenbosch University

A *Strategy for Teaching and Learning 2014-2018* was released based on the *Institutional Intent and Strategy 2013-2018*. Stellenbosch is one of the most economically unequal communities in South Africa, a fact that requires the university to rethink their teaching and learning practices so that it can "contribute to the positive resolution of these



challenges” (Stellenbosch University 2014:2). One of the aspects I particularly draw upon from the *Strategy for Teaching and Learning* is the section on graduate attributes, indicating that students should have enquiring minds, and be transformed into engaged citizens, dynamic professionals and well-rounded individuals (Stellenbosch University 2014:1). I am curious as to what contribution education through art can make toward establishing these attributes in Stellenbosch University graduates. That brings me to the context of my particular case study. The Stellenbosch University *Centre for Inclusivity* commissioned an interactive artwork to form part of a week-long celebration of *20 Years of Freedom and Democracy* on campus. This centre particularly negotiates and facilitates diversity and the treatment of minority groups on campus. The late Rector, Professor Botman, established the centre to report directly to his office as a chief strategic priority. It is not an academic department, does not present formal lectures and operates on a project driven model. Their brief specified that the artwork should visually illustrate students’ sense of belonging at Stellenbosch University.



Figure 2.1 *We belong Here* at 06:30am on the first day

I responded to their brief by making an interactive artwork with the statement “WE BELONG HERE” weaved with fabric into black mesh (Figure 2.1). I added five clear

containers, each holding fabric strips in the colours of the South African flag. Each of these containers had a statement about citizenship on them with which members of the public could choose to identify. Clear instructions (Figure 2.2) described the artwork as “our visual illustration of how we see a community where everyone can belong” and invited passers-by to “grab pieces of fabric from any of the containers” and “weave it anywhere into the wire” (Figure 2.3).



Figure 2.2 *Instructions*

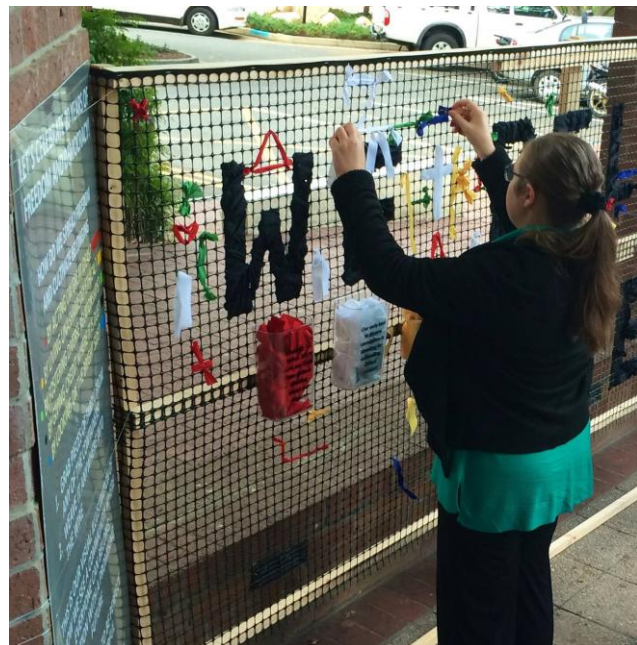


Figure 2.3 *Students participating on the first day*



The statements on the containers were:

“Let us celebrate the uniqueness of our community and consider the impact of our actions on one another.”

“Apathy is lethal. Let’s turn our ideas into actions, thinking about our legacy.”

“A culture of honour and respect can take us further than one of riots and protests.”

“Our only tool to disarm corruption is standing for unbending, ethical conduct.”

“Let’s ignite hope for our country by sharing our creative ideas and gratitude rather than our complaints.”



Figure 2.4 *We Belong Here* at 17:30 on the last day

My primary objective with the artwork was to create a conversation piece that people can partake in their own way and at their own time. I deliberately planned the artwork to become more interesting and beautiful as participation increased, bearing nuances of the

South African flag without the over-used visual cues. The work was installed on Monday the 12<sup>th</sup> of May and taken down on Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> of May 2014. I was surprised at the enthusiasm with which students and staff participated (Figure 2.4) and the amount of extra fabric I had to add to the containers especially on the second and third days.

## The Expanded Field

Rosalind Krauss' (1979) postmodern concept of the expanded field is what permits the previous section on Teaching and Learning at Stellenbosch University to end with an interactive public artwork. Modernism demanded clarity and distinction between categorised terms which led to specialisation in specific fields (Krauss 1979:42). These finite terms have, however, been "stretched and twisted in an extraordinary demonstration of elasticity", resulting in categories that are "almost infinitely malleable" (Krauss 1979:30). Through historicism the new is made comfortably familiar, since it is framed as a gradual progression from past forms (Krauss 1979:30). In this study, I deal with elastic understandings of art and education which are normalised through the lens of historical context and development. The expanded field is explored by problematising of the sets of oppositions between which modernist categories are suspended<sup>16</sup> (Krauss 1979:38). This field thus sanctions "an expanded but finite set of related positions" to be explored outside the conventions of a particular medium or field (Krauss 1979:42). I have experienced a tension at Stellenbosch University between what is and what is not art and education. This led me to rely on an expanded but finite pursuit of the possible interactions between education, non-education, art and non-art; hence art education in the expanded field. I am grateful for Krauss' (1979) theory of the expanded field that created a versatile framework for this study on Art Education. This framework allowed me to create and analyze an artwork, not in the traditional context of art history, but as a critical public intervention to stimulate conversation. The expanded field enabled me to evaluate the work from a public perspective, using interview candidates with various degrees of visual literacy. A semiotic

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<sup>16</sup>A set of binaries are transformed through a logical expansion into a "quaternary field" which both mirrors and opens the original contradictions (Krauss 1979:37). The suspension of sculpture between non-architecture and non-landscape opens up other possibilities between the domains of landscape and architecture, of which sculpture is merely "one term on the periphery of a field in which there are other, differently structured possibilities" (Krauss 1979:38).

or art-historical approach to the research would have resulted in vastly different findings that would not necessarily reflect the views of the average Stellenbosch University student.

## Conclusion

I carefully contextualise this study of art education in the expanded field in relation to the transformative role of higher education institutions. This revolving spiral of transformation strikes successes in different measures during each political term. Higher education institutions, such as Stellenbosch University, are regarded as key instruments of democracy and citizenship education. Stellenbosch University currently strives toward cultivating innovative, future-oriented leaders for the new South Africa. Students need a willingness to redefine both their national heritage as well as their understanding of learning for these university aims to be achieved. For this reason, my research drives me to inspire an expanded understanding of art and education in service of institutional policy implementation.

# CHAPTER 3

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## THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

The theoretical perspectives integral to this study can be divided into three sections namely Critical Discourse on Campus, Critical Citizenship Education, and Art and Critical Citizenship Education. The diverse selection of primary literature guides the study in an exploratory way and continually informs my research as if I am entering into conversation with these texts. At the outset, I have delved into the university's expectation of their graduates and the means by which they seek to meet these expectations. Critical citizenship education is a powerful objective that can be achieved through the combined efforts of educators awakening students to their potential, employing the hidden curriculum and arousing courageous debates. This objective is carried profoundly in the vehicle of artistic citizenship and relational aesthetics because of the sense of freedom and community that art can create.

### Thinking Critically About University Education

Enquiring minds, engaged citizens, dynamic professionals and well-rounded individuals; these are the characteristics that should describe Stellenbosch University graduates. Critical and reflective lecturers and staff who innovatively deliver engaging curricula are the keys to an enriched campus learning experience. My case study is an example of an attempt to address these aims, and I am inspired to do so by other role players such as the *FVZS Institute for Student Leadership Development*. Only through the responsible pursuit of trans-disciplinary knowledge creation can universities produce leaders and creators of knowledge that can solve problems and respond to a distant future.

Stellenbosch University identifies four key graduate attributes that are pursued, and stipulates certain teaching and learning arrangements that strengthen this objective (Stellenbosch University 2014:7). I have curiosity regarding the contribution interactive

educational artworks can make towards grounding Stellenbosch University graduates in these attributes. Firstly, a graduate with an “enquiring mind” is an interested and creative critical thinker and problem-solver who is able to appreciate and draw equally on international and local sources of knowledge (Stellenbosch University 2014:6). Such a student understands that knowledge creation and acquisition bears “responsibility and accountability” (Stellenbosch University 2014:6). Secondly, engaged citizens understand that “transformation of society involves transformation of the self” (Stellenbosch University 2014:7). They serve civil society through leadership and empathy, understanding the balance between connectivity, exclusivity, critical community engagement and global networking to solve national and international dilemmas (Stellenbosch University 2014:7). Thirdly, for graduates to become dynamic professionals they need to be innovative and flexible to respond to changing circumstances, applying their knowledge to tangible problems (Stellenbosch University 2014:7). Such professionals are effective communicators who take initiative, deal ethically and value entrepreneurship (Stellenbosch University 2014:7). Lastly, graduates who are well-rounded individuals have an integrated understanding of well-being and success, and they deliberately seek opportunities to grow socially, individually, intellectually and emotionally (Stellenbosch University 2014:7). Such individuals make informed decisions to enhance their own humanity and to “enrich life in its broadest sense” (Stellenbosch University 2014:7).

Stellenbosch University (2014:7) identified a few required focus areas that support these graduate attributes. Lecturers should be “role models, leaders and experts” who create an “enquiry based learning experience” through curriculum that engages with relevant “social and environmental issues” (Stellenbosch University 2014:8). Active learning takes place through flexible and innovative learning processes that teach students to communicate and to question and obtain knowledge (Stellenbosch University 2014:8). Stellenbosch University (2014:8) ultimately aims to create an “enriched campus experience” where students acquire knowledge from various sources (peers, lecturers, and staff from support departments of services), many perspectives and diverse social backgrounds. This case study determines to explore whether my interactive artwork was received as an “enquiry based learning experience” that engaged a national social issue, namely, citizenship. It would be interesting to uncover whether active learning took place by means of communication and questioning amongst peers. I hope the artwork enriched the campus

experience through my collaboration with the support services staff to create an awareness of diverse opinions on campus.

Two support departments of services where critical thinking and citizenship are particularly evident at Stellenbosch University are the *Centre for Inclusivity*<sup>17</sup> and the *Frederik van Zyl Slabbert Institute for Student Leadership Development*<sup>18</sup>. Three of the short courses offered by the *FVZS Institute* namely, *Democracy and Citizenship*, *Global Citizenship* and *Students as Agents of Social Change*, point to the embodiment of the above mentioned university aims (n.a. 2014:<http://www0.sun.ac.za/fvzs/>). The *Democracy and Citizenship* course aims to unpack the meaning of democracy, citizenship and accountability, and lead students towards becoming active participants in the democracy (n.a. 2014: <http://www0.sun.ac.za/fvzs/>). The *Global Citizenship* course concentrates on leadership development by encouraging “global social-awareness” and practicing public reasoning skills (n.a. 2014: <http://www0.sun.ac.za/fvzs/>). The *Students as Agents of Change* course facilitates an exploration of students as “change-agents” within a South African and African context, historically and at present (n.a. 2014:<http://www0.sun.ac.za/fvzs/>). Although not all students participate in these courses yet, these are the initial steps in drawing students into critical conversations about democracy and citizenship.

University graduates should be capable of engendering critical thinking to negotiate difference, oppression, exclusion and vulnerability in South Africa (Waghid 2008:20)<sup>19</sup>. Trans-disciplinary knowledge could be employed without reservation in order to relate technical education to responsible knowledge creation practices such as intellectual risk-taking and the impulse of civic contributions (Waghid 2008:23). I would argue that the student collaborations facilitated by the *Centre for Inclusivity*, as well as the *FVZS*

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<sup>17</sup>The *Centre for Inclusivity* was discussed in Chapter2, p. 22.

<sup>18</sup>The *Frederik van Zyl Slabbert (FVZS) Institute* offers various accredited short courses through which students can expand their leadership skills and enrich their learning experiences. The programs are founded on the pillars of democracy and human rights, active citizenship and social responsibility, mentorship and coaching and entrepreneurship and social innovation (n.a. 2014: <http://www0.sun.ac.za/fvzs/>)

<sup>19</sup>Yusef Waghid is a professor in Philosophy of education at Stellenbosch University, so his writing is entirely appropriate to the context of my study.



*Institute's* short courses are instances of trans-disciplinary knowledge that are created outside, but not exclusive of academic programmes. According to Harvey and Knight (1996:156), a dual process needs to take place by which higher education institutions need to progress from the conventions of teaching to the enigmas of learning, to enable these institutions to function as transformative agents. My case study is largely founded upon Harvey and Knight's (1996:10) view that universities need to produce leaders, creators of new knowledge who can identify problems, formulate solutions and respond to a yet unknown future.

From the university vision and strategy, it is clear that Stellenbosch University is determined to engage students' minds in a new way so that they can start taking up their citizenship toward the improvement of the country. The university seeks to do this by shaping graduates who have enquiring minds, are engaged citizens, become dynamic professionals and well-rounded individuals. My case study, initiated by the *Centre for Inclusivity*, joins forces with the *FVZS* short courses as powerful initial steps in the stimulation of critical conversations. The magnitude of the progression from conventional teaching to enigmatic learning should not be underestimated.

## Critical Citizenship Education

The notion of citizenship is frequently mentioned throughout this study. In this section, I settle on a comprehensive definition of citizenship that frames my study well. Critical citizenship is borne out of critical thinking and critical pedagogy, and draws upon the humble love of educators to harness their students with hope for their country. Educators mainly rely on the hidden curriculum and underlying message of their education to speak to the hearts of their students<sup>20</sup>. Democracy and citizenship are concepts in flux and should constantly be redefined through courageous conversations.

Laura Johnson and Paul Morris (2010:77) define citizenship as the "promotion of a

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<sup>20</sup> This claim will be discussed later with reference to Olivia Gude and Michael W. Apple, pp 23-24.

common set of shared values which prepare young people to live together in diverse societies". The specific common values that they refer to are tolerance, human rights and democracy, and their outcomes include social justice and diversity (Johnson & Morris 2010:77-78). In order for such competent citizens to inhabit this world, citizenship education needs to be "cross-disciplinary, participative, interactive, related to life, conducted in a non-authoritarian environment, cognisant of the challenges of societal diversity and co-constructed with parents and the community" (Johnson & Morris 2010:85). While citizenship applies to an entire society, Johnson and Morris (2010:79) connect it to higher education by forging a link between critical thinking<sup>21</sup> and critical pedagogy<sup>22</sup> to propose critical citizenship education. Critical citizenship education implies "the emancipation and transformation of students...toward a better society" (Johnson & Morris 2010:92), is an exceptionally relevant concept considering the context in which my case study is situated. From a Stellenbosch University perspective, critical citizenship promotes inclusivity, and requires innovation so that students can become thought leaders who fully engage their citizenship toward improving South Africa.

With such an incredibly stimulating university vision and a global drive toward critical citizenship education, the agency lies with educators to rouse students' potential. Because individuals are conditioned, but not resolute, Paolo Freire argues that the potential for change rests more upon the attitude of the educator than on that of the student (in Mayo 2005:169). Freire firstly expects educators to function out of love; an irreplaceable prerequisite for anyone who works with people (in Mayo 2005:175). Secondly, notwithstanding their competence and authority, educators should humbly learn and relearn what they think they know, because greater coherence between individuals entails being willing to learn from each other (in Mayo 2005:176). Motivated by humility and love, Freire challenges educators to ask challenging questions and encourage students to ask critical questions of themselves and others (Adams, Bell & Griffin 2007:31). I agree that

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<sup>21</sup>Critical thinking is a process that enables students to include a deeper understanding of values and power relations in their opinions and arguments (Johnson & Morris 2010:79).

<sup>22</sup> Critical pedagogy refers to a body of literature that provides educators with instruments to develop a sense of agency in the oppressed so that their reflections on their own conditions can lead to improved action (Johnson & Morris 2010:79).



we should not underestimate the inherent “creative, formative and investigative capacity” of all students (Mayo 2005:172).

At an institution such as Stellenbosch University that focuses on course-specific curriculum education, educators often underestimate the power of implicit agendas. The Hidden Curriculum is knowledge that is intentionally or unintentionally transmitted from educator to student, but that does not form part of the formal curriculum and official outcomes (Gude 2000:2). Michael W. Apple (1979:27) asserts that "becoming a person is a social act" whereby individuals at a certain point adopt an understanding of reality as truth. This usually happens through the influence of curricula that are portrayed as "apolitical and a-historical", hiding the "complex nexus of political and economic power and resources" that supplements a substantial quantity of curriculum regulation and compilation (Apple 1979:29). The process of education, through both the formal and hidden curriculum, is the socialising force whereby people accept the limited functions they eventually fulfil in their communities (Apple 1979:32).

Henry A. Giroux (1989:5) points out that both democracy and citizenship rely on a critical struggle over “forms of knowledge, social practices, and values” associated with local tradition and history. But, he adds that the term ‘citizenship’ is a present condition, and does not possess significance beyond the lived experiences of public life (Giroux 1989:5). If citizenship is a “socially constructed historical practice”, it is imperative to understand that concepts such as democracy and citizenship “need to be problematised and reconstructed for each generation” (Giroux 1989:6). Therefore, citizenship can be understood as dedicated discourse firmly rooted in the potential of public life to bring forth circumstances of solidarity, reflection and establishment (Giroux 1989:7). Johnson and Morris (2010:77-78) enter democracy, social justice, diversity, tolerance and human rights into the on-going global conversation on citizenship and critical citizenship education. Let me unpack the gist of these shared values in relation to the context of my study.

### 3.2.1. Democracy

The eighteenth century definition of democracy states that it is an institutional method that relies on public election of favoured candidates to carry out political decisions that serve the common good (Schumpeter 1942:250). Democracy is a political system that relies on “faith in the capacities of human nature”, intelligence, and in the benefits of cooperation (Dewey 1991:134). A democratic system forms its values and regulations according to the cumulative opinions of “every mature human being” in the vicinity (Dewey 1991:134). This method is indebted to the concept of a “common good”, “the obvious beacon light of policy”, which can be defined simply to any individual through rational arguments (Schumpeter 1942:250). Thus, all members of the community need to acknowledge a “common will” directly related to the “common good, welfare or happiness of the people”; the only point of contention then being the pace at which the “common good” is advanced (Schumpeter 1942:250). Stellenbosch University (2013:10) underlines their national and global responsibility to counteract pressing inequalities and discrimination by earnestly strengthening democracy and human rights on campus.

### 3.2.2. Social Justice

In *Teaching for diversity and social justice*, Adams, Bell and Griffin (2007:2) describe social justice as implicitly “participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency”, facilitating the equal distribution of resources. Education for social justice<sup>23</sup> should enable students to obtain credible information sources, develop honest personal reflection, question their former assumptions, and formulate an appropriate understanding of their social roles and responsibilities (Adams *et al.* 2007:32). This means that an institution such as Stellenbosch University has to see to it that all students can be “physically and psychologically secure” and that they harness a communal sense of social responsibility (Adams, Bell and Griffin 2007:1). In such a socially just community, individuals should be able to develop their own capacities as well as function interdependently (Adams *et al.*

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<sup>23</sup>Some of the “core frameworks” that underlie social justice education are balancing emotional and cognitive learning, complementing individual and collective learning, vital social interaction in the classroom, reflection on experience as an important tool, and rewards for changes in awareness or personal growth (Adams *et al.* 2007:15).

2007:1). Stellenbosch University's (2013:19) mission states that the university determines to "create an academic community in which social justice and equal opportunities will lead to systemic sustainability". The struggle for social justice in the arts is the protection of "spaces where people can come to be" (Griffiths 2003:39). That means spaces where people are free to express their opinions, share their ideas and raise their concerns; spaces that are not intimidating, where there is no right or wrong and where people will not be scrutinised.

### 3.2.3. Diversity

Diversity<sup>24</sup> can be understood as the "shared understandings and practices" of how groups form, relate and "include and accommodate one another in light of the differences associated with group identity" (Shewder, Minow & Markus 2002:368). Notions of diversity can be both highly embedded and transparent, they are "cultural models" that guide our engagement with the world and allow communication between people (Shewder *et al.* 2002:368). One of Stellenbosch University's (2013:15) three "strategic priorities" are "broadening access" which, amongst others, aims to increase the "diversity profile of students and staff".

### 3.2.4. Tolerance

Tolerance is a "theory of difference" which acknowledges differentiation without superiority (Shewder *et al.* 2002:412). Tolerance as a motive seeks moderation and coexistence within communities as opposed to universalising virtues and homogenising people (Shewder *et al.* 2002:412). Although Stellenbosch University's strategic documents do not refer directly to tolerance, I relate Shewder *et al.*'s (2002) understanding of tolerance to the university's use of the term "inclusivity" (Stellenbosch University 2013:17). The university aims to establish an "inclusive culture" that can activate the contributions and strengths of all its members (Stellenbosch University 2013:17-18).

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<sup>24</sup> The term 'diversity' is an interdisciplinary term used in fields as disparate as science, politics, law, sociology and business.

### 3.2.5. Human Rights

Human rights are a set of internationally codified norms that are “entitlements to human dignity” (Brysk 2002:3). At its core, human rights serve to protect groups and individuals from “the abuse of power” (Freeman 2011:201). Although human rights are interpreted and specified in diverging and contradicting ways, it is a universal phenomenon from which not a single nation is fully exempt (Freeman 2011:5). These rights are founded on philosophical constructs of human nature, religious traditions, civic demands and international stimulus (Brysk 2002:4). The concept of human rights is pre-eminently interdisciplinary, mainly negotiating between law, philosophy and politics (Freeman 2011:13). Both democracy and human rights concern the “common good”, but the relation between the two concepts are problematic on many levels (Freeman 2011:209). Even though democracies by and large respect human rights, democratic systems can occasionally violate these rights, and the sustaining of human rights at times limit democratic practice (Freeman 2011:209).

This is because human rights are concerned with the needs of the individual, while democracy relies on the majority vote and thus the ability of the voters to take individual needs into consideration. A similar tension exists at Stellenbosch University. Like human rights, strategic vision documents are compiled by higher management, taking the entire spectrum of students into consideration. But these strategies trickle down through staff, lecturers and students who individually conduct themselves not according to the strategies, but according to what is best in their opinion. The popular choice does not necessarily take all individuals into account, and often revolves around personal needs. This may relate to the disjuncture between institutional policy and practice that I picked up as a Stellenbosch University student. The university management express powerful and necessary strategic aims, but it does not always seem that other role players on campus (staff, lecturers and students) value, grasp or embody these aims.

If critical citizenship education is regarded a preparation for social engagement through a string of shared values, such an education relies on employing the explorative and creative capacity of students. This message of citizenship is conveyed through the hidden curriculum, an on-going conversation of establishment and reflection. Critical citizenship is

necessary in democracy to understand the role of the common good and the systemic sustainability embedded in social justice. Cultural models of diversity inform engagement, communication and an ethos of inclusivity and tolerance. Although these shared values inform one another, complexity arises when concepts such as democracy and human rights both advantage and limit one another.

## Art and Critical Citizenship Education

I particularly draw on a few inspiring understandings of art in the social sphere in my exploration of art education in the expanded field. Through artistic citizenship, novel ideas about shared spaces can inspire individuals toward a unique kind of social service. Relational aesthetics can be used as a tool to understand this process that teaches best practices in terms of collective identity and shared living. The potential of art to revitalise possibility and action is integral to understanding this implicit artistic agency.

### 3.3.1 Artistic Citizenship

Art education and artistic production could particularly create a platform for “social self-awareness” and “an instrument of human liberation” (Campbell & Martin 2006:26). Although artistic citizenship<sup>25</sup> seems to be an oxymoron contrasting self-directed individualism with communal obligation, the boundaries between the personal and the social are not that clear-cut (Campbell & Martin 2006:1). ‘Artistic citizenship’ references the grounded artist as opposed to the ignorant artist that can perform “a particular kind of social good”, inspiring ideas and attitudes regarding shared living and communal identities (Campbell & Martin 2006:3). Art could effectively be diffused over the entire civic structure when it is no longer restricted<sup>26</sup> to its traditionally “sanctioned spheres of culture” (Campbell & Martin 2006:152). Artists can then contribute to economic development and

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<sup>25</sup>Campbell and Martin suggests that citizenship implies membership “of a political community” where several rights are enjoyed and certain duties are assumed; a collective identity that is simultaneously personal, social, temporal and spatial (Campbell & Martin 2006:10).

<sup>26</sup>Governing bodies and individual narrow-mindedness often limit our understanding of art.

community service when art is allowed to infiltrate and assimilate into other social and political practices (Campbell & Martin 2006:152). Over the past decades, the arts have continually played a crucial role in terms of conscience and moral criticisms, as well as stimulating hope and possibility in the imagination (Campbell & Martin 2006:27). Public art<sup>27</sup> is “a way of seeing, a way of knowing and a way of gathering” (Campbell & Martin 2006:2). My artwork relates to public art for special occasions which Campbell and Martin (2006:4) describe as a “vehicle of connection”. Such artwork cannot simply appear in public, but need to negotiate a space for itself, understanding how the work joins “its voice with other voices in public” (Campbell & Martin 2006:5).

### 3.3.2. Relational Aesthetics

If university education should prepare responsible citizens and provide dynamic knowledge, the value of trans-disciplinary knowledge becomes more evident. This kind of civic education could be materialised through an expanded understanding of art education. Relational aesthetics refers to the bonding capacity of art to ignite unconstrained discourse and prompt inter-human relations where artworks could function as action models within the everyday that teach individuals to inhabit the world in a better way (Bourriaud 2002:112). Relational art<sup>28</sup> prefers the collective social space over a symbolic private space as its theoretical foundation (Bourriaud 2002:14). This social drive leads artists towards “expressing this hands-on civilisation”: to tighten the space of interaction through tangible symbols (Bourriaud 2002:15). Art therefore becomes a “state of encounter” that produces a particular sociability, which is what Marcel Duchamp refers to as “the coefficient of art” (Bourriaud 2002:18). The interactive nature of relational aesthetics affords it a certain “social transparency” enabling artworks to continue existing beyond time and space into discussions and negotiations of identity, experience and truth (Bourriaud 2002:41). The transparency stems from the fact that the gestures that inform and materialise the artwork are part and parcel of its subject (Bourriaud 2002:41). The

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<sup>27</sup>Campbell and Martin (2006:2-3) mention three segments of public art, namely artworks for monuments, representations and occasions.

<sup>28</sup>The notion of relational art indicates a profound disruption of the cultural, aesthetic and political aims of modern art (Bourriaud 2002:14).

artwork thus becomes a tool that serves to link individuals together and reinforce unity without relying on uniformity (Bourriaud 2002:43).

### 3.3.3. The Practice of Possibility

In order for universities to engage this transformative capacity, Maxine Greene (1995:5) asserts that the social imagination of students<sup>29</sup> is activated by the expansion of the boundaries of valid and appropriate knowledge. She encourages active learning<sup>30</sup> through discourse and participation (Greene 1995:5) which awakens students to the vitality of possibility and "the need for action in the name of possibility" (Darder, Baltodano & Torres 2003:100). Freedom is not "the absence of constraint or obligation", but rather a deep sense of possibility, the agency to select and create, to discover other perspectives and to resist generalised answers (Palmer 2001:115). The personal and cultural contexts of each individual certainly influence their experiences, so a sense of community is only established once individuals gain an awareness of their own perspectives in relation to the perspectives of others (Palmer 2001:116).

According to Greene (2013:251), art in education is a valuable vessel that can help individuals recognise the connections between themselves and their communities. She maintains that the arts in education should "open new horizons" in both medium and content that liberate the social imaginations of students (Greene 2013:252). This liberation enables students to act against the measurement standards that separate them from one another and from their ability to learn in creative and differing ways (Greene 2013:252). In addition, Greene (1995:379) asserts that students need to consciously participate in artwork and exert energy on it in order to gain affective, perceptual and cognitive insights. She describes such engagement as a "delicate balance" between facilitating visual literacy and freeing them to perceive meaning<sup>31</sup> (Greene 1995:380). Young people should be

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<sup>29</sup>That is their ability to visualize possibilities and the latent capacities of their society.

<sup>30</sup> Active learning is education that leads to dialogue between different cultures and social groups which prompts students to ask more questions and develop their own reasoning. Educators are encouraged to think beyond schooling to the larger domains of education (Greene 1995:5).

<sup>31</sup>However, the incapacity to "control what is discovered as meaningful" causes discomfort for many

educated to grow, find their voices and participate in their communities (Greene 1995:382). Greene believes that “encounters with the arts” foster individual growth in terms of relational capabilities, inventiveness, problem-solving and zeal for living (Greene 1995:382).

Public art can facilitate the methods by which a community perceives, learns and assembles. These are means by which art can serve communities by giving the tools to bind and relate disparate groups without the need for homogeneity. If such public artworks are regarded as a form of public education, artists tap into the educator’s profound ability to negotiate difference and impact learners despite apparent boundaries.

## Conclusion

These texts form the backbone of my research and are the lens through which my findings are interpreted. Such an explorative case study welcomes open-ended conclusions and favours the acknowledgment of interpersonal density. Clearly, Stellenbosch University is determined to engage citizenship and rouse curiosity in hope that critical conversations on citizenship take place. We see that democracy, social justice, diversity, tolerance and human rights are all complex, but vital concepts in understanding critical citizenship education. Through the hidden curriculum and the call for educational hope, a deep sense of citizenship can be embedded in learners. This can be achieved using different means, but I specifically underlined the usefulness of art in this process. Art can revive a deep sense of possibility and agency, making room for artistic citizenship to be entrenched through relational aesthetic methods. Exposure to arts in education liberates students to relate to one another more directly and opens their minds up to new ways of learning and meaning-making. Ingenuity, ardour and problem-solving are merely a few valuable consequences of encounters with the arts in education.

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traditional educators (Greene 1995:380).



# CHAPTER 4

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## METHODOLOGY

In this chapter I elaborate on the research design and research methodology that was employed in this study. The qualitative research approach, case study research design, non-probability sampling, interview method of data collection and the inductive content analysis are discussed according to each of their distinguishing features.

### Design of the study

#### 4.2 Research Approach and Paradigm

In this qualitative study, I conducted my research by means a case study and a review of cross-disciplinary literature in specific domains of democracy, critical citizenship and art<sup>32</sup>. The qualitative research method was used because of its flexibility and scope for human interpretation (De Vos *et al.* 2011:68). Qualitative research is not a linear process, but rather a spiralling process that allows researchers to shift between ideas, theory, and data collection and continuously re-examining and refining each of them (De Vos *et al.* 2011:68). Qualitative research produces contextually situated<sup>33</sup> theory-rich knowledge through a reflexive process, an “exciting interdisciplinary landscape” that welcomes many perspectives on knowledge creation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006:5). Within qualitative research, I employed an interpretative paradigm stemming from a relativist ontology that sanctions a systematic, interactive, methodological approach to unearth individuals’

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<sup>32</sup>See Theoretical Perspectives, pp. 27-39..

<sup>33</sup> This is therefore an appropriate method for anti-colonial research because the anti-colonial prism defines knowledge as context bound and shaped by the location from which it emerged. Situated knowledge emphasises “subjectivity, positionality, location and history” (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:3).

perceived reality (De Vos *et al.* 2011:311). This approach is based on the social connotations that people allocate to their interactions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006:14). An epistemology is described as a “collective consciousness of a worldview” or “a set of assumptions that we have about the world” (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:249). These collective assumptions are, however, contextually bound and not necessarily shared by people from the same cultural, geographic or racial groups (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:249), which is why the anti-colonial viewpoint does not support dominant epistemologies.

## 4.2 Research Design

I applied a case study research design to relate the theoretical perspectives discussed and to explore multiple viewpoints and possibilities. This method has a long history that is principally indebted to a French author, Frederic le Play and the *Chicago School* in the United States, and has largely been used in the social science disciplines in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century (Gerring 2007:x). Although the term ‘case study’ has multiple synonyms, John Gerring (2007:19) defines it as an “intensive study of a single case” with identifiable boundaries<sup>34</sup>, that “comprises the primary object of an inference”, and of which the purpose is to elucidate a broader group of cases<sup>35</sup> (Gerring 2007:20). Case studies are valuable in facilitating an exploratory process of knowledge gain by situating a single case within a broader context and framework (De Vos *et al.* 2011:321-322). This method was most suitable to my study of art education in the expanded field because of its high construct validity that enabled me conduct a relevant and useful study in a short amount of time.

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<sup>34</sup>The temporal boundaries of a case study are often less apparent than its spatial boundaries (Gerring 2007:19).

<sup>35</sup>An implication of a case study is that the situation under scrutiny is not necessarily an accurate reflection of the population, but merely an indicator of the existence of concerns.

## Sample Selection and Data Collection

I made use of a non-probability sample, which implies that I could not determine the odds of any particular individual to be selected and therefore all members did not have the equal probability of being selected (De Vos *et al.* 2011:391). Through purposive sampling, I used my own judgement to select individuals or groups (units of analysis) (De Vos *et al.* 2011:392) who were most likely to have encountered my artwork, who have expressible opinions regarding higher education or the intrinsic capacities of art education in the expanded field. I interviewed two lecturers, twelve students and three other staff members who work with students at Stellenbosch University<sup>36</sup>. In qualitative research, sampling evolves as the research field is explored and particular units of analysis appear to be more central to comprehension than others (Babbie 2010:193).

I specifically located individuals with diverging perspectives on art, democracy, citizenship and higher education so that I could compile richer information (Babbie 2010:7). According to Sefa Dei and Kempf (2006:8), anti-colonialism works simultaneously with similarity and difference, regarding the two as mutually expressive. Examining variation exposes both difference and sameness both between and within subjects (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:8). Mining such complex information required a method that could extract specific data from the units of analysis by sensitively picking up on nuances. I collected my data by means of individual and group interviews, which is the most common method in qualitative research (De Vos *et al.* 2011:342). This enabled me to obtain direct information from a range of different perspectives and to produce concentrated amounts of data closely related to my research question (De Vos *et al.* 2011:342). This method was especially relevant to my study because of the dialogue it stimulated between individuals and the educational function such conversations fulfil (Greene 1995:5). The interview findings are lightly interwoven with my personal reflection on my process and experience as researcher.

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<sup>36</sup>The lecturers are situated in the Education and Science faculties. The students were from a spectrum of faculties, courses and year-groups. The staff members were from different support departments.

## Capturing Data and Ethical Considerations

An electronic voice recorder was used to capture the data from the interviews. The recordings were stored on my personal computer and an additional copy was stored on a compact disc (CD) as a backup. The recorder, computer and CD were kept in my private home and were not accessed by anyone other than myself. The interviews took place in the vicinity of Stellenbosch University in safe and comfortable locations suggested by each participant.

According to De Vos *et al.* (2011:113), research should be founded upon “mutual trust, acceptance, cooperation, promises and well-accepted conversations and expectations between all parties involved in a research project”. I structured my ethical considerations according to a list of criteria that De Vos *et al.* (2011:113) compiled. It was highly unlikely that the questions or interview situations would cause any physical or emotional harm or discomfort to the participants. All participants partook voluntarily and signed an informed consent after being fully briefed on the aim of the research, the duration of their involvement, the procedures followed in the research, the possible advantages and disadvantages, and my personal credibility as researcher (De Vos *et al.* 2011:113). None of the participants received any monetary remuneration for their participation. Their signed consent forms were treated with the utmost discretion and they also received adequate opportunity to ask questions and the identities of all participants have been kept completely confidential and have not been disclosed to anyone. I believe that I am adequately competent to conduct this research and was continually under careful supervision and guidance. The public artwork was funded by the *Centre for Inclusivity*, but they did not fund the research and had no involvement in the outcome of the research project.

## Data Analysis

The most appropriate data analysis method in case studies is inductive content analysis. Inductive content analyses are used to move from the specific to the general; using a

small amount of cases to develop particular themes (Babbie 2007:49). This “creative reasoning mode” does not necessarily need to extract answers or facts from the data, but rather opens up possibilities and poses new questions (De Vos *et al.* 2011:49). Through the inductive method, a social theory precedes a study that seeks to “discover patterns that may point to relatively universal principles” (Babbie 2010:56). Patterns are detected through questioning the frequency, magnitude, structures, processes, causes and consequences of social phenomena. Patterns that the researcher analyses and interprets are then identified through a coding system (Babbie 2010:22; 400). The data generated during my interviews were coded through the process of open, axial and selective coding (De Vos *et al.* 2011:412). The inductive content analysis was therefore a valuable method for my explorative case study as I dealt with complex and evasive concepts to put forward a new understanding of an existing issue<sup>37</sup>.

## Validity and Trustworthiness

A common objection to qualitative data is that it cannot be validated through scientific evidence or calculations<sup>38</sup>, supposedly compromising the trustworthiness of the findings. Validity refers to the measure of accuracy with which the study focuses on the observations that it determines to explore (Babbie 2010:153). However, writing from the paradigm of anti-colonialism in education, I am hesitant to subscribe to commonly recognised criteria for validation of knowledge. Anti-colonial theories promote the “decolonizing of the mind” by working with alternative knowledge and asserting “the power of local subjects’ intellectual agency” (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:11). Nevertheless, the most common threats to the validity and trustworthiness of qualitative research are “researcher bias and measurement bias” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006:66). So, the truth value of my research is determined by the honesty of the participants as well as my ability to maintain

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<sup>37</sup>Through accepting some knowledge as “common facts”, researchers build on a cumulative and inherited body of knowledge and understanding. Although this has clear advantages, it is important to challenge the “agreement reality” and expectantly pursue a “fresh understanding of something everyone else already understands” (Babbie 2010:5).

<sup>38</sup>There cannot be specified criteria to assess the findings, because such criteria would draw the research back to a “positivistic model of the research process that assumes ‘truth’ out there waiting to be found out” (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006:67).

their original intentions. This was done by using triangulation of data, constantly paraphrasing participants' answers back to them to make sure that I interpreted them appropriately (Hesse-Biber & Leavy 2006:65). I consciously regulated the neutrality of my questions and tone of voice during interviews, as well as fostered an inclusive and expansive interview environment so as to not influence the generated data. Although I did not commit to providing research findings that are universally applicable, the findings merely determine to ask new questions and open up possibilities instead of propose direct recommendations.

## Conclusion

Although the anti-colonial prism critiques existing methodological knowledge and practice (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:243), aspects of commonly used methods have been invaluable in this investigation. The spiralling process of qualitative research was guided by the interpretative paradigm. Anti-colonial researchers value both similarity and difference as conditions that inform one another. From this position, I used non-probability purposive sampling to explore certain questions and issues surrounding my case study. Sensitive nuances in human intention and experience were picked up through individual and group interviews, which I then analysed through an inductive content analysis. By relying on the triangulation of my data, I was able to gather valuable and trustworthy information that might raise questions and unlock future possibilities.

# CHAPTER 5

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## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

The social imagination of students refers to their ability to hope; to imagine the latent possibilities within their midst (Greene 1995:5). According to Greene (1995:5), this skill is set in motion when the boundaries of appropriate knowledge are stretched. I would say that an interactive artwork on campus was a considerable stretch in terms of what many Stellenbosch University students deem valid methods of knowledge creation and transmission. The aim of this study was to explore how educational artworks could contribute to the university's transformational undertaking towards socially just education. My primary research question in this study is to delve into students' responses to the artwork. These reactions are considered in relation to Stellenbosch University's particular context and the value of art education in the expanded field at work in higher education institutions.

In this chapter I place the research findings from my semi-structured individual and group interviews in conversation with the contextual framing and theoretical perspectives discussed in the preceding chapters. The research findings are divided into four main themes that respectively deal with interactive art on campus, Stellenbosch University as an institution, the mind of the learner and the shared values of the citizen. In the first theme I evaluate students' responses to the artwork and the value of educating through art. The second theme deals with Stellenbosch University and how it relates to the concept of transformation. In the third theme I unpack ways of knowing and sharing knowledge. Lastly, the fourth theme accounts for participants' views on belonging and active citizenship.

## 5.1 Interactive Art on Campus

### 5.1.1. Responses to the Artwork

#### **5.1.1.1. Students' Immediate Reactions to the Artwork**

"I watched it for a while and, you know, the people walking past were immediately drawn to it" responded S12<sup>39</sup>. S9 again commented "it looked very interesting and intriguing from the outside"; "there was a cluster of people the whole time, especially on the first day". S9 elaborated on this observation saying "I was so excited to partake", and "students enjoyed it immensely", "I actually heard in res<sup>40</sup> people talk about how they put up a colour today; they were kind of excited about it". The interactive artwork was described as "fun and exciting" by S9 who also "saw it in *The Matie*"<sup>41</sup>, while a few others such as S12 pointed out that "the bright colours definitely adds to it being successful". According to S7, "you were visually drawn to it", "you felt like you also wanted to add to it"; "it helped that it was visually attractive". Liberty is a deep sense of possibility, the opportunity to select and create, and to discover new ways of knowing (Palmer 2001:115). From both my own observations at the artwork and the interviews feedback, it seems that the artwork engendered notions of freedom and liberty.

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<sup>39</sup> The codes S, SM and L indicate the three types of participants interviewed namely, students (S), staff members (SM) and lecturers (L).

<sup>40</sup>The abbreviation for any of the Stellenbosch University Residences is "res".

<sup>41</sup>*The Matie* is the local independent weekly campus newspaper at Stellenbosch University.





Figure 5.1 Cover of “Die Matie”/ *The Matie*, 14 May 2014.

### 5.1.1.2. Appraisals and Value Judgments

S11 was, like most participants, “pleasantly surprised by the outcome”. “The whole project<sup>42</sup> is covered in little pieces of fabric” as if “people wanted to max it out”, because each person could “choose a colour and represent themselves on the piece of artwork”, said S12. This work is a public artwork for special occasion, an instrument of connection that joins “its voice with other voices in public” (Campbell & Martin 2006:4-5). It seems people felt a connection to the artwork as it impacted them beyond the occasion that it served to commemorate. A frequently mentioned feature, the location, was described by S9 as “the most central part of campus” “where variety and diversity is at its best”, and where “anybody on campus could partake in it”. S8 asserted that “being watched ... is sometimes daunting” and attributed success to “enough space for people to approach it in groups”. SM1 concluded that it “came across very strong”; “I want to act on that message”, “it spoke to my heart as well”.

The Centre for Inclusivity’s “return on investment” is what S4 decided to base his evaluation on, but since this study is the only measurement, S2 deduced “its good risk to take”, because “by not doing anything like this, we also risk preventing it from happening”. S1 commended the artwork saying, “the way in which it was presented makes

<sup>42</sup> Most participants referred to my artwork as a project, which might indicate something of a narrow understanding of art. But for the sake of this study I will not be delving into this reference in detail.

it stand out”; “the beauty in this artwork lies in how well it was executed”. Many participants, like L2, affirmed “a great use of university resources”. It is encouraging to see students realise the complexity of this kind of public artwork. It is a risk, and the success is not fully measurable, and the return on investment is intangible, but those who dare tread these spaces often walk away highly rewarded.

#### ***5.1.1.3. Negative Reviews and Potentially Destructive Connotations***

According to S6, “there are always people that are negative”. Similarly, S13 also confirmed in saying that “mostly my friends will have mixed feelings towards this”. L2 mentioned that people might interpret the slogan ‘WE BELONG HERE’ as “a militant statement”, while S7 attributes criticism to the language, saying: “I don’t know how people who would have reacted to it being in English”. S11 mentioned an apparent “passivity on campus”, while L2 remarked that “it might probably be so simple that it flies below the radar screen”, which is substantiated by the following comments:

S4: “projects like these, when it’s done on the whole university it loses the personal touch that it needs”

S1: “just ran past it a few times, I never really stopped”

S5: “if I was more curious and inquisitive to know what it stood for ... it would have made a greater impact”

Nevertheless, SM2 confidently stated that “if you put something [on campus] and students do not like it, they will voice it in the media”, so “the fact that there were no public negative remarks ... is a real positive and it shows that this was well received”. Considering these critiques keeps us humble and indicates room to grow. It is important not to lose hope in sight of honest feedback.

### **5.1.2. Educating Through Art**

#### ***5.1.2.1. Perceived Impact of Visual Communication***

Moving from the specific to the general, more than one participant used the phrase “a picture says a thousand words”. S5 augmented that by stating “with the artwork, it’s a message that is short, but powerful, and it’s visually stimulating” and “we are also quite a

visual society". S13 drew on the reflection that "art can really speak to people's hearts and not necessarily just their brains", while L1 stated in more academic terms, that visual communication "accesses another part of the brain", specifically "it accesses the subconscious in a more inviting way without [people] realising it". S13 further contemplated that "art isn't language specific and everybody understands a symbol... and the hope it brings with it", which is why "using art will bridge the gap between different cultures and different people".

The conviction that "people respond to visual imagery and visual messages much quicker and much clearer" is what satisfied S8.

S8: "You stand back and you see your voice among many". "If people are exposed to such visual metaphors regularly, subconsciously they will start seeing that what they do makes a mark; that it matters"

The immediate and compelling manner in which people respond to visual communication demonstrates Campbell and Martin's (2006:2) description of public art as "a way of seeing, a way of knowing and a way of gathering". In my case I could relate this description to say that my public artwork may have been a way of seeing your voice among many, a way of knowing that people have different opinions and a way of gathering around the topic of belonging at Stellenbosch.

#### ***5.1.2.2. Art That Serves Civil Society***

"It's so cool that art and the more political side of the country can be brought together" was a surprised remark by S10, which confirmed S7's observation that "people have a lot of preconceived ideas about what art is". S7 maintained that "people actually don't realise the value of art, participating in it" when art is "taken out of its gallery space and put into public spaces". Artistic citizenship mentions art-making that inspires ways of thinking about shared living and communal identities (Campbell & Martin 2006:3). Such an application of art relates well to the Stellenbosch University's (2014:7) goal of producing engaged citizens that serve civil society through leadership and empathy and that bring people together to resolve pressing local and global issues.

However, this stands in contrast with S7's experience of Fine Art education at Stellenbosch University.

S7: "we definitely weren't exposed to discourses of social justice, transformation". "If anything ... those kinds of sentiments, citizenship and nationality, were criticised". "I think that that was a very narrow way that we were taught, because in no way were we encouraged to go beyond ourselves". "We weren't encouraged to take ownership of other peoples suffering and oppression".

From S7's feedback, it seems that there is a correlation between their expectation, "to take ownership of other people's suffering", and the university's goal of citizens who serve society through leadership and empathy. However, there appears to be a disjuncture between these expectations and lived experiences. "If the focus of [art education] changes ... then it will mean that artists are going out ready to ... move into sectors of government and teaching and those kinds of spaces", stated S7. This argument seems coherent with Campbell and Martin's (2006:152) position that when the arts are no longer limited to conventionally approved areas of interest, they would effectively be diffused over the entire civic structure. I agree with S7's sentiments which aptly describe my own experiences of art education in the schools that I attended and in my undergraduate Fine Arts degree. This experience is very personal, and is not necessarily true for art education everywhere. During the coursework of my Masters in Arts Education, my understanding of art expanded vastly and I came to develop curiosity to explore some of the boundaries that I previously steered clear of.

### ***5.1.2.3. Enriching the Learning Experience***

When questioned on the merit of art as a vehicle of citizenship education, SM3 replied this method "breaks it open for people, people see things, and as we know it's one of the best ways for people to learn". According to L1, "Educating people about democracy and democratic ideals through the medium of art provides a translation into practice of philosophical ideas" and therefore makes it "accessible to ordinary people". S5 noted that "art has a message" that is "not conveyed in the normal way that you receive information, especially as students", which links to what S10 meant by "it can be done on a lighter

note". From participants' feedback it seems they found the artwork a valuable teaching instrument because it was unexpected, subtle, practical and accessible. The above-mentioned characteristics are often missing in traditional lessons on democracy, tolerance, human rights, diversity and social justice. These philosophical concepts<sup>43</sup> are complex and interrelated with life and should be assimilated into people's worldviews rather than being conveyed as static information.

Active learning<sup>44</sup> through discourse and participation (Greene 1995:5) is most relevant to these concepts because it allows students to relate concepts to their personal conduct. It appears that this artwork was regarded a social platform that had the potential to be "an instrument for human liberation"(Campbell & Martin 2006:26). SM2 mentioned that "the artwork contributed to people sharpening their thoughts or to even bring it in a conversation amongst friends". SM2's remark correlates with the discourse of relational aesthetics where artworks ignite conversations and function as citizenship models (Bourriaud 2002:112). Learning then takes place in participants' discussions about, or resulting from the artwork. So, educating through art is not just knowledge transfer, but guidance of student's thoughts and conversations. However, certain structural, institutional and personal shifts need to be made in order for this extended understanding of learning to be harnessed.

## 5.2 Particularity of the Context

### 5.2.1 Expanding the Boundaries

#### ***5.2.1.1. Perceptions of Institutional Transformation of Stellenbosch University***

There are also socio-political, cultural and demographic factors<sup>45</sup> that necessitate measures of change that are strengthened by expanded perceptions of learning. L1

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<sup>43</sup>The concepts that I am referring to are democracy, tolerance, human rights, diversity and social justice.

<sup>44</sup> Active learning refers to education that prompts students to ask more questions and develop their own reasoning through conversations between diverse groups (Greene 1995:5).

<sup>45</sup>These factors have been elaborated on in Chapter 2, pp. 33-35.

describes Stellenbosch University's institutional growth saying it needs "to be flexible and changeable and open to transformation of all kinds; not only politically inspired transformation ... but also ideas". S7 bluntly states "it's inevitable that the university will change, and probably more rapidly as time goes on", but currently "there's not enough transformation to actually show that twenty years of democracy impacted Stellenbosch". SM1 holds "it's still a struggle", "we think we've gone a far way", but "we've come a little way".

S7: "In order to bring change it has to be radical change; I think a more aggressive form of transformation could have been implemented". "They should reinvestigate their modus operandi".  
 "Is this the right way to move forward, or are there other ways that we can make change visible?"

Participants' interchangeably referred to transformation as a change in thinking and in institutional culture. Some may feel despondent about the measure of visible change, but I agree with L2 who described transformation on campus as "a bit like a wave". Although it constantly pulls back, there is a bigger push forward every time. That might be the reason why S2 remarked: "Sometimes I feel like it's struggling to get that forward momentum". My experience is that institutional transformation at Stellenbosch University is gradually starting to spill out into the hearts of people. Stellenbosch University (2013:10) desires to drive transformation by success, instead of necessity, and the specific strategic areas targeted in this transformation are broadening access, sustaining the momentum on excellence and enhancing the societal impact (Stellenbosch University 2013:15). I relate participants' responses and the university's transformation aims back to Maxine Greene's (1995:5) claim that the social imagination of students<sup>46</sup> is activated when the boundaries of valid and appropriate knowledge are expanded. Drawing on what I have discussed about art, learning through art can play a definite role in both birthing ideas and shifting the atmosphere.

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<sup>46</sup>The social imagination is the ability to envisage possibilities and recognize latent capacities of their communities.

### ***5.2.1.2. Perceived Barriers to Transformation at Stellenbosch University***

Participants, however, mentioned various obstacles that prohibit the university from achieving the campus experience that they strive toward. These responses revealed vital aspects that shape the particularity of the Stellenbosch University context. “I also get the idea that the university is a bit confused about where it wants to go”, was S3’s suggestion. S11, then again, argues “the university must not do stuff just to be political about it, students don’t like that and that creates antagonism rather than solutions”, which communicates several other participants’ scepticism towards superficial transformation. S7 poses the question: “if the students don’t see transformation in positions of power then how are they going to want to do it themselves?” Although there may be many obstacles, S7 pointed out a seminal concern.

S7: “In many ways the university is actually reflection of ... the demographics that Stellenbosch represents, the way that it’s geographically situated”. “As long as the university is reflecting that, it will take longer than it should have already taken to change”

S7: “It’s put in a dilemma because it’s put in a very European setting”, “even the way that the town looks”, “students come here with that kind of mentality.”

Eurocentric discourses need to be challenged (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:2) so that the university can negotiate between its colonial heritage and the socio-economic challenges that South African graduates need to address. I find that a confusion of direction, political canvassing and superficial transformation may as well all be symptoms of a deeper-rooted obstacle, that is, socio-geographical culture. S7 alluded to Stellenbosch’s entrenched history of racism, colonialism and European culture (Giliomee 2007) that is reflected in the town planning, architecture and heritage. This issue can be addressed when artistic production is used as a platform for “social self-awareness” (Campbell & Martin 2006:26) that inspires attitudes pertaining to communal identities (Campbell & Martin 2006:3) so as to tighten the space of interaction through tangible symbols (Bourriaud 2002:15). I picked up on this notion through S8’s description of the artwork as an opportunity to “see your voice among many”; a “visual metaphor” that assures people that “what they do ... matters”.



### ***5.1.2.3. Necessity of and Impediments to Changing Students' Perceptions***

Upon questions regarding novel sources of learning and artworks as education, lecturers expressed a necessity for individuals to expand their thinking. L2 suggested indispensable "transformation from how we think, it's transcending how you think". According to L2, "it's not just change to; it's change out of towards something else". L1 mentioned "plasticity in nature in order to respond to the needs and expectations of the environment, social environment as well as physical environment". Dynamic professionals have the flexibility to adapt to an ever-changing world, and engaged citizens understand that "transformation of society involves transformation of the self" (Stellenbosch University 2014:7). S2's conviction that the artwork would "open up people's minds, students' minds", exemplifies relational aesthetics' claim that artworks can continue existing into conversations and negotiations of identity, experience and truth (Bourriaud 2002:41).

However, SM1 pointed out that: "It's difficult to change perceptions", because "we get them from such an early age so it is an imprint in your mind". L2 stressed that transformation and change "evokes fear for some people, it evokes some discomfort for others, and for me sometimes this is so", but maintained that "you can't hold onto something real or imagined at the cost of somebody else". S5 explained that "because [some students] didn't have the change that they expected, they are a bit sceptical about the next thing". Whatever the source of resistance, SM1 maintains that change "must come from the heart, not just in the mind; you have to lead people into it". What the participants mentioned relates well to the notion of critical citizenship education that champions "the emancipation and transformation of students...toward a better society" (Johnson & Morris 2010:92). Greene (1995:379) favours participatory artworks as a method in this regard to propel students toward affective, perceptual and cognitive insights. Artworks can function as instruments of liberation (Campbell & Martin 2006:26) that free students to discover meaning on their own terms (Greene 1995:380). However, many traditional educators experience discomfort at their powerlessness to regulate the meanings that are discovered (Greene 1995:380).



## 5.2.2. Stellenbosch University as an Institution

Students, lecturers and staff members' view of Stellenbosch University play a pivotal role in the extent to which the university's objectives can be obtained. I questioned participants on their perceptions of the university and their definitions of learning in relation to my artwork and art in education *per se*.

### 5.2.2.1. *Underestimating Students and the Curriculum*

My artwork liberated students to form their own connections and make meaning of the subject matter at hand, which is an uncommon means to educate at Stellenbosch University. "I don't think the university realises the potential of students, how innovative they are and how deeply they think about stuff", is SM1's opinion, who continues saying that "adults have difficulty speaking to students in many ways; students speak to students, students do it in a different way". In contrast, SM2 notes that "it was a strong culture at the university"; "students are not there to hijack the campaign with their ideas". Educators should not underestimate the inherent "creative, formative and investigative capacity" of students (Mayo 2005:172). Knowledge transfer needs not be mono-directional from educator to student, but can take on many forms. From the feedback, it seems that using art as a medium might aid capitalising on the creative potential of both students and educators to recognise sources of knowledge that are beyond the norm.

Although L1 hopes that the message of the artwork would be recognised by their students "and that it would resonate with what we'd been talking about in class", S7 points out that "some departments are very detached from the university's vision, and there's a disjoint from what the vision is and what happens on campus". This disjoint is substantiated by S9's experience who said that "never have I been confronted with these questions as I was with this project, in an academic framework". S9 continued in saying they had only been confronted with similar questions in "my residence and workshops that I have been to or leadership development courses". If many people share S9's view it could mean that the support departments of services (which includes residences, the Centre *for Inclusivity* and the *FVZS Institute*) are currently greater vehicles of the university vision than the classrooms. This makes sense in light of the stance that flourishing citizenship education should be "cross-disciplinary, participative, interactive, related to life, conducted in a non-

authoritarian environment, cognisant of the challenges of societal diversity” (Johnson & Morris 2010:85). That means that there is scope on campus for artworks to be used as links not only between in- and out-of-class educations, but also between the different support departments. Using art in education is a worthwhile instrument to steer individuals to recognise the connections between themselves and their communities (Greene 2013:251).

#### ***5.2.2.2. Staff and Lecturer Views on Learning and Knowledge Creation***

As indicated by SM3, “we always focus on student learning, but not so much on the lecturers and staff members also learning”. Peter Mayo (2005:176) relates that Freire similarly expects educators to remain “humble to relearn that which they think they already know”.

SM3: “What we are doing is really helping to bridge this divide between in–the-class and out-of-class experiences”. “The more collaboration we have between academic departments and so-called support departments of services, it will help the students sort of increase their integrated thinking about life”.

SM3’s view concerns trans-disciplinary knowledge; knowledge that relates academic education to responsible knowledge creation practices such as citizenship contributions (Waghid 2008:23). L1’s opinion is “if we can do everything as research ... then we are generating knowledge whilst delivering services; that’s the ideal”. My artwork is thus an example of L1’s ideal, because it served the university in commemorating 20 years of democracy and this service is documented and analysed in research.

It seems that L1 agrees that higher education institutions need to advance from the conventions of teaching to the enigmas of learning (Harvey & Knight 1996:156). In addition, learning can take on many forms.

SM2 says you should be “happy when other students copy what you do, because that means they feel that the way of communication was valuable”. This statement indicates that students are creatively assimilating the communication models provided by the Centre

for Inclusivity into their own contexts. The university is successfully providing a leadership role for students by giving them the tools for creative conversations so as to facilitate their own discussions on transformation and belonging. The textbook is no longer considered the only valid source of knowledge<sup>47</sup>. Learning takes place when diverse perspectives and social backgrounds converge between students, their peers, lecturers and other staff members. Both educators and students can afford to expand their boundaries of appropriate knowledge (Greene 1995:5). Such an expansion needs to take place so that Stellenbosch University (2014:8) can provide the “enriched campus experience” that it desires. I suspect that the course-specific curriculum focus at Stellenbosch University allows lecturers to separate themselves from the collective power of implicit agendas. The process of education involves both the formal and hidden curriculum and results in a socialising force that assimilates students into the roles that they are to fill in their communities (Apple 1979:32). That means that if lecturers can see the value in an artwork such as mine to aid them in their educational endeavours, a more profound impact can be made on the students.

### ***5.2.2.3. Indicating the Relevance of the Graduate Attributes of Stellenbosch University***

Each university has a unique mandate by which they work to guide students' thoughts and conversations so that particular insights can be achieved. Stellenbosch University (2014:1) identifies key attributes that their graduates need to “fit the standing of the University” and to serve their society. I did not specifically mention these attributes in the interviews, but the feedback often alluded to each of these strategic priorities.

When asked about the responsibility of the university, participants mentioned that the university should stimulate enquiring minds.

S11: “what the university is trying to do is create a generation of leaders and of thinkers that have already gone about these [problems] and can bring solutions to the table”;

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<sup>47</sup>The text book has never been the only valid source, but was considered as such.

S5: "to expand your knowledge and even just think about stuff that you wouldn't normally think about."

When questioned on what they think students should learn at university, participants referenced students becoming engaged citizens.

SM3: "whatever I learn, the skills that I develop... will always mean something and increase in its influence if it's allowed to go out."

S2: "maybe we must ... deal with raising up leaders ... not only academic leaders, but also ethical leaders, moral leaders. Once we have more leaders that can actually lead and serve...then we might see the fruits of that in our democracy."

Upon questioning a staff member on their professional outcomes, they explained the process of developing students into dynamic professionals.

SM2: "it's so nice to see students really bridge that space from student to becoming a professional and I think some of that bridging can already happen on campus". "We actually want to groom someone for the professional environment."

In answering other questions about the role of the university, participants added that the university needs to cultivate well-rounded individuals.

S5: "the university will equip you to some extent to be a functional person in society";

L2: "where you round yourself out as a person, you kind of get to know who you are and you become who you'd like to be."

The aim of this study was to establish in what way interactive educational artworks might be a factor in bringing the university's institutional vision and transformational mandate to fruition. That is why my interview questions on participants' immediate reactions and innate interpretations of the artwork were followed by questions on the university. I asked participants where they think the university is heading strategically, and what they expect of the university. Throughout the interviews I continually related their expectations of a

university education back to the artwork and the measure that the artwork served the expectations that they mentioned. Their answers to these questions led to the remarks interpreted in the following sections.

## 5.3 An Enquiring Mind

In dialogue about the interactive artwork on campus, participants mentioned aspects that students need to be emancipated in, and the conditions that enable and disable this process. A graduate with an enquiring mind is curious, critical and creative and open to both new and diverse ideas (Stellenbosch University 2014:6).

### 5.3.1. Ways of Knowing

#### ***5.3.1.1. The Honest Spaces That Thoughts Can Emerge In***

S2 mentioned the artwork “adds to poking at people’s ideas”, while SM1 expected it to “open up people’s minds, students minds”, “once they do this, they will think more deeply about it”. L1 similarly suggested “this kind of exercise can happen more and more and just make people think a little bit”.

S3: “It gets them thinking and that’s at least the first step, and most probably most important. If they start thinking about it, maybe they will start caring about it.”

However, SM2 pointed out “how intimidating sometimes the space of a university is for people to participate, and I just think we are unrealistic about that in terms of encouraging people to express their views”. L2 said “those kinds of hidden things ... come out in spaces where you create some trust”; “if you don’t create that space ... it doesn’t happen”. I deduct from L2’s statement that public art with a relational aim should endeavour to create a safe and trusting space for interaction.

SM2: “it’s about luring somebody in”;

S7: “it’s good that the university is making spaces for conversation”;

S2: “it’s better to get challenged in a safe space, the university can sort-of be like a middle ground, instead of having no challenge

to your thoughts and your perceptions and then you get in the real world and then all of a sudden you have to deal.”

Social justice in the arts protects "spaces where people can come to be" (Griffiths 2003:39), where educators can ask "thought-provoking questions" (Adams *et al.* 2007:31) and create platforms where the "roots of civic-mindedness" can be embedded into the consciousness of the nation (Ramphela 2008:13-14). S9's statement that they "heard in res people talk about how they put up a colour today" and S8's remark that there was "enough space for people to approach it in groups" affirmed the fact that the artwork was perceived as a safe space by participants where they were free to express their opinions, share their ideas and raise their concerns. S13 also related that "people have come together around the artwork, and then people will hear we have different opinions and maybe start talking about it". I hope that it inspired some students to create more spaces for each other in conversations that are not intimidating, where there is no right or wrong and where they do not need to fear criticism.

#### ***5.3.1.2. Each Opinion is Embedded in Many Other Opinions***

SM2 mentioned "finding your voice" as a "key to citizenship", suggesting that the university should "respectfully and gently make people feel like their opinions are important". S5 remarked "at Stellenbosch they encourage people to question stuff and not just take things as they are". S2 added that people need to "get rid of ignorant ideas about themselves, about their opinions, about other people's opinions". S5 and S2's comments allude to the aims of relational aesthetics to create artworks that lead to negotiations of identity, experience and truth (Bourriaud 2002:41). This idea sits well with the view that active learning transpires through open and innovative learning practices that train students to communicate and to question and obtain knowledge (Stellenbosch University 2014:8).

S9: "The University is a place where people should obviously learn to have an opinion", "this is another life skill that you kind of require; it's necessary to think about life and I would say that this project is one way that people did have the opportunity". "It could have a ripple effect".

However, according to S2 “there’s tensions between different ideas”. That is why S1 stated “they don’t want to put themselves out there for the fear of people asking them and them having to defend their standpoint” which is “intimidating, so someone who is not used to sharing their opinions might not be comfortable”. S8 raises another reason why students might not express their opinions; “I don’t think that people feel that they have agency anymore, I don’t think students feel that what they think matters at all”, “students don’t believe that their voices have agency”. That is exactly why honest spaces for open and truthful debate need to be created. Participants’ feedback reveals that the artwork was a safe space to a certain extent, but peer opinions and social awareness caused anxiety and fear. There seems to be a discomfort to share personal views either due to a fear of rejection or a feeling of despondency. A similar artwork may be more effective in future if more students are exposed to situations where they need to share their views and develop confidence in the power they could exert by doing so.

### 5.3.2. Sharing Ideas and Concerns

#### ***5.3.2.1. A Climate of Open and Truthful Debate***

S13 related to the artwork that “people have come together around the artwork, and then people will hear we have different opinions and maybe start talking about it”. Such an awareness of the exchange between perspectives is what creates community (Palmer 2001:116), and it could be brought about by the bonding capacity of art to ignite unrestrained conversations (Bourriaud 2002:112). S3 firmly concluded that “discussion or conversation, that’s how you sort things out”. S9 added that “even though people didn’t partake, they spoke about it ... and if people start conversing about issues that actually matter, that’s great”. “We are so privileged to be in a space like a university to challenge and be challenged, where we can give space and wings to ideas”, was SM3’s stance.

S9: “critical engagement is anything where people have to apply their thoughts in a way that they have to analyse things and think about their own ethical stance on things, their own opinions”.  
 “To really be willing to be wrong in comparison to other people but to stand with what they believe in and how they feel about something”.

S12: “It’s very important to actually learn to deal with other people’s points of view and maybe alter yours in positive ways when you hear ideas from other people that you haven’t necessarily thought of before”.

This is probably one of the reasons why HESA (2010:2) asserts that conditions for honest debate urgently need to be created. Sensitive or underlying topics might become more prevalent in conversations after these issues have been unveiled in safe, facilitated discussions. Citizenship itself can be understood as a persistent dedicated conversation entrenched in the faith that public life can yield circumstances of solidarity, reflection and establishment (Giroux 1989:7). Maxine Greene (1995:382) is convinced that “encounters with the arts” can foster growth in young people so that they can find their voices in the public domain.

#### ***5.3.2.2. Intervention Stems from Exposure***

Yet a few participants, like S2, portrayed some of their peers as “ignorant and apathetic towards anything that’s relevant”; whereas S1 said “people don’t want to show that they care because they don’t want to stand out”. Conversely, S6 explained “if nobody cares then they’re just going to keep on complaining, I think it is a huge problem”. S8 said “Stellenbosch campus is becoming a more aware campus” where “exposure is key”, and described the artwork as “a great way to get students on campus to interact with relevant social issues”. “If they start thinking about it, maybe they will start caring about it” were the words of S3. African higher education institutions need to generate knowledge that addresses societal needs (Abdi *et al.* 2006:31), and that means that these institutions need to get students to think about and experience empathy toward societal needs.

S8: “Citizenship means filling your shoes in terms of living in a space”, “being aware of people around you that are in the same space as you are”. “It means taking up responsibility for causes that aren’t necessarily your responsibility”; “their cause becomes your cause”.



The fact that the artwork is regarded a way to spark students' interaction with relevant social issues affirms the view that artworks can contribute to relational capabilities, inventiveness, problem solving and zeal for living (Greene 1995:382).

## 5.4 A Collection of Communal Principles

S8's above-mentioned explanation of citizenship seems to be a more rudimentary version of Johnson & Morris' (2010:77) definition of citizenship being "a common set of shared values" that prepare inhabitants to live together in diverse communities. One of my objectives with this thesis was to determine what students' reactions to an artwork revealed about students' perceptions of citizenship in South Africa.

### 5.4.1. A Well-Rounded Individual

A Stellenbosch University's (2014:7) strategic priority that prepares graduates for their future is growing them into well-rounded individuals that spread wisdom, enhance their own humanity, and grow along social, individual, intellectual and affective dimensions to "enrich life in its broadest sense".

#### 5.4.1.1. *Drawing Everyone into the Tapestry*

The artwork alluded to this preparation for communal life among diverse groups of people. L2 described the artwork as a "*lappieskombers*"<sup>48</sup>, and S1 described democracy as "everyone giving their part to give us a masterpiece". S7 explained "we all are weaved together in a community", a "tapestry", "as a single thread you can't do a lot, but if it's threaded together then it becomes clearer what the vision is". S12 affirmed that "every person walking past this do have a colour in themselves, according to their personality", "that is what they can contribute to society and that is what they are going to take from your project". The artwork serves to link individuals together and reinforce unity without

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<sup>48</sup>A patchwork quilt is a "*lappieskombers*" in Afrikaans.

relying on uniformity (Bourriaud 2002:43). I got the impression from participants' responses that students appreciated the fact that they could contribute to the artwork in their own way and that they could choose their colour and placement. Participants seemed to associate the contributively nature of the artwork to the manner in which individuals invest in their communities in different ways.

SM3 firmly stated "it's about understanding my connectedness; we are all connected". "If we as a university can create a generation that has a mind-set of 'we can solve this thing together', we will live into a solution", is the resolve of S11.

SM1: "To have a better South Africa we need to have a better understanding of each other, really respect each other for their specific norms and ways and cultures. We can't all have the same culture and perceptions."

SM1 supposed "we must allow others to feel equally attached" to our country. Diversity is the collective methods by which vastly different people embrace one another in groups (Shewder *et al.* 2002:368), and tolerance is coexistence within communities (Shewder *et al.* 2002:412); and both of these are vehicles of inclusivity. It is possible to infer from these participant reactions that the power of public art of this kind lies not so much in cognitive transmission as it does in creating lived experiences of metaphorical ideas. I can deduce that this is what L1 meant when they said the artwork "provides a translation into practice of philosophical ideas" and therefore makes it "accessible to ordinary people".

#### ***5.4.1.2. Students' Sense of Belonging at Stellenbosch University***

Although in theory we agree that everyone should embrace and coexist, belonging is the lived-experience and emotional counterpart of that theory. S13 affirmed "the first step is to feel a sense of pride and belonging" "before [students] can move towards higher education or learning". Psychological security is a key priority in social justice education, which is unreservedly "participatory, inclusive and affirming of human agency" (Adams *et al.* 2007:1-2). S7 remarked that the artwork was "thought-provoking" because "people got to think about whether they do belong in Stellenbosch or not". S13 mentioned that "you need to open your bubble a little bit and embrace other people". Such a conviction can help Stellenbosch University to "show people that it's not exclusively for a certain type of

person, but that it can be for everyone”, in the words of S7. I regard this attempt to draw all people in as an extension of human rights, as proof that everyone is human and has an inherent sense of dignity.

When educators “work across differences” their work profoundly impacts lives (Griffiths 2003:38). Democracy itself relies on confidence in the “capacities of human nature” and in the benefits of cooperation (Dewey 1991:134). Almost in contrast to many of the prior mentioned citizenship definitions, S3 declared “when I think of citizenship, I just think of belonging”; “I don’t think you have to do anything, you just have to be from there”.

S12: “This is our country, this is our university, this is where we grow, where we learn, where we make friends, we belong here.”

In spite of these sentiments, belonging is a contingent concept and there are those who do not yet experience that sensation.

#### ***5.4.1.3. Belonging and Not Belonging***

“Even though you live here<sup>49</sup> you might not feel that you belong here” was S13’s honest opinion. S7 agreed that “there’s a certain stereotype that goes with being a *Matie*<sup>50</sup>”; “there’s this ideal that you always have to work towards”. These responses reveal that living and belonging are not parallel, and that the connotations associated with Stellenbosch students hinders some students from belonging. S5 went as far as to say that when some of her peers “see the word ‘belong’ they get offended with that because they don’t know what it really means to belong”. According to S7 “a lot of students don’t feel like they belong in Stellenbosch”. Even though my participants did not reveal strong primary evidence of a personal detachment from Stellenbosch University, I get the sense that this is not an accurate sample of the greater population. SM3 mentioned that “we are actually experts, in a sense, on separateness” who are “struggling with the togetherness”.

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<sup>49</sup> ‘Here’ refers to Stellenbosch.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Matie’ is a nickname for a Stellenbosch University student.

This is why L1 suggested that “we need to make certain structural changes ... to invite people to come and to feel that they belong here”. Graduates should apply their thinking skills to facilitate difference, oppression, exclusion and vulnerability in South Africa (Waghid 2008:20).

The anti-colonial prism does not endorse conditional belonging, but champions the hermeneutic relationship of difference and sameness both between and within subjects (Sefa Dei & Kempf 2006:8). Nevertheless, S5 insists that “the roots may run much deeper”, “you can do it on one level but I think it can even be a spiritual matter as well”.

S5: “if you’re not spiritually anchored you’re always going to have a hole”. “People can go to great lengths to make you feel like you belong but if you don’t have a spiritual anchor then it doesn’t matter what people do. And to expect the university to give you that anchor, I don’t think it’s so fair”.

Educators often undervalue the influence of underlying curriculum agendas. The complex web of factors that exert power on curriculum regulation and compilation often go unnoticed by both students and lecturers. At Stellenbosch University, there might be a will to enhance belonging, while aspects such as student stereotypes, socio-geographic culture, and compartmentalised views of education could carry a contradicting ‘hidden curriculum’. My artwork contributed to the underlying message of belonging on campus, but it worked against these aspects. It is crucial that public artworks understand their negotiations “with other voices in public” (Campbell & Martin 2006:5).

#### 5.4.2. An Engaged Citizen

Only once individuals experience a sense of belonging, will they care to make a contribution. The university strives to take all graduates to a place of engaged citizenship so that they can perform leadership roles as members of civil society by contributing, collaborating and serving (Stellenbosch University 2014:6).

#### **5.4.2.1. *Interacting with the Artwork***

S8 remarked the artwork “dealt with democracy which is an interactive ideology”; “it just reflected democracy very well”. A strong intrinsic social drive is what leads artists towards “expressing this hands-on civilization”, contracting the space of interaction through tangible signs (Bourriaud 2002:15). SM1 noted “being interactive [is] an effective method for all people”, because “when you do something yourself....it enhances your thinking process”. Likewise S5 supposed “those who participated, they gained something, or they received new knowledge”. These opinions prove that artworks can function as a “state of encounter” that produces a manner of sociability (Bourriaud 2002:18).

S11 started quite controversial, saying “people tend to be passive and not participate”, but concluded that “maybe students aren’t that passive; they’re just sort of active in a certain direction, sort of passive toward certain things”. Students just need to be awakened to the vitality of possibility and “the need for action in the name of possibility” (Darder *et al.* 2003:100). This concurs with S12’s deduction, “people being open to getting involved and doing something, that’s what it communicated to me”. It is quite reassuring to hear that my artwork could serve as a vessel that expressed some people’s willingness to participate. This is so because my artwork was chiefly founded upon the stance that universities need to produce leaders and creators of knowledge who can name challenges, formulate solutions and respond to a yet unfamiliar future (Harvey & Knight 1996:10).

#### **5.4.2.2. *Serving Through Responsibility and Contributions***

Naming challenges and responding with solutions are active processes that imply that the university should not only create spaces for debate, but also for participation. In S1’s opinion, “we have so many places on campus where each type of person can participate”. According to S5, you “can’t expect the university to make you a citizen or make you an active participant, it’s something that you have to put effort into as well”, because in the words of SM3 “we are not just here entitled to receive and be serviced”. S11 would like to challenge the university to “motivate students to take initiative and do on their own”, for “if we as a university can create a generation that has a mind-set of ‘we can solve this thing together’, we will live into a solution”. That means “being able to contribute in your own capacity to the bigger goal”, as said by S1.

However, S1 further stated “people don’t want to take responsibility”, since “once you initiate something you have to take responsibility for it and then you become accountable and that is inconvenient”. But S6 said when you “leave the university you have a greater responsibility of pulling other people up”. I deduct that despite an unwillingness to act or initiate, it is a skill that the university should embed in its graduates. Education for social justice enables students to form appropriate insights into their communal sense of social responsibility (Adams *et al.* 2007:1). S12 acknowledged that every person’s addition to the artwork represents “what they can contribute to society and that is what they are going to take from [my] project”. S5 suggested that “those who participated, they gained something, or they received new knowledge”. This correlates directly with Maxine Greene’s (1995:379) assertion that students gain from artworks when they exert energy and deliberately involve themselves in the artwork.

S10: “they have a responsibility to their society and to themselves and to others”. “If you have this problem with something, it’s just as much your responsibility as someone else’s even if there’s a higher structure above you.”

Stellenbosch University (2013:16) describes both staff and students as thought leaders that advance knowledge which serves their community. The steps that need to be taken for students to become these thought leaders are firstly to stimulate conversations about these issues so that awareness is raised, and secondly to translate these thoughts into meaningful actions. The feedback suggests that art education in the expanded field can aid higher education institutions in bringing about a change in the mind-sets and lives of their students.

#### **5.4.2.3. *Becoming Active Citizens***

S12: “Citizenship to me entails being ... a person that contributes in a positive manner to society”. “When you don’t break down structures and you don’t go against authority, you are a good citizen”. “It’s something you proactively do where you live and where you work”. “People don’t think about it every day, but

you are a citizen every day and you choose to be a good citizen". "Citizenship to me should be only a positive concept in order to make a better democracy".

S12 expressed some other participants' view on citizenship. SM2 also described citizenship as "perceiving yourself as an active participant in a room that is really greater than the local". She contrasted her view with the following example:

SM2: "Collective victimhood and taking action around that is not citizenship. People are charmed by that". "Perception is that Stellenbosch has always been very passive and now students are standing up for their rights. "It sounds like citizenship", "but it's not connected to the flag values".

It seems that many definitions of citizenship prevail as each individual brings their own interpretation to the fore. However, all these definitions relate back to Johnson and Morris' (2010:77) collection of communal principles that prepare young people to collectively inhabit diverse societies. I gather from these participant contributions that action is physically doing, but it is also actively acting out a positive mentality, and daily living and spreading a hopeful attitude.

## Conclusion

From students' immediate responses to the artwork it seems that most people were visually drawn to it; it came across very strong; and so, it was generally regarded as a great investment. Although there were mixed reactions and questions regarding its impact, the comparison between positive and negative publicity indicates that it was well received. People respond in an immediate and compelling manner to visual communication because it accesses the subconscious. This is a valuable finding in light of artists moving into sectors of politics and education. This artwork educated participants by guiding their thoughts and conversations so that the impact can outlive the period and space of the artwork. The unexpected, subtle, practical and accessible nature of the artwork made it a valuable teaching instrument for subjects such as democracy, tolerance, human rights, diversity and social justice that are complex and interrelated with life.

Participants mentioned factors that prohibit an enriched learning experience and that characterize the particularity of the Stellenbosch University context. While some students perceive a disjuncture between the vision and reality, there are those who work to bridge the gap between in- and out-of-class educations. It generally seems that support departments are currently more effective vessels of the university vision than the classrooms. A more profound impact can be made on students if lecturers can recognize other learning experiences, such as my artwork, as enhancers of their curriculums. Overall, most participants recognised that university is about more than academic education. University education should lead to expanding the knowledge of serving leaders, bridging the divide between student and graduate while rounding students out as individuals. In order for these leaps to be taken, students should overcome their fear and discomfort by learning to become adaptable to an ever-changing environment. Some participants patiently wait out the ebb and flow of transformation on campus, while others expect more radical change to be implemented. Despite the various push-factors, the European setting and colonial history<sup>51</sup> of Stellenbosch is regarded as one of the primary barriers to the university's progress.

The curious, critical and creative enquiring mind requires a safe space for thoughts to generate. Even though the university seems like an intimidating arena, in contrast to the workplace it is a gentle middle-ground. Public art should thus work to generate this kind of space so as to facilitate meaningful interaction. It is regarded a life skill to form an opinion and negotiate the tensions between ideas. Students expect the university to cultivate this skill since several students apparently doubt the agency of their voices. It sounds as if more honest conversations need to take place where issues can be dealt with and where people can build up the courage to differ and learn from one another. Participants concluded that this entire process, from thoughts to opinions to conversations, is necessary for people to develop empathy; that is, taking up responsibility for causes on behalf of the one suffering. The artwork was acknowledged as a safe space where

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<sup>51</sup> Stellenbosch's entrenched history of racism, colonialism and European culture (Giliomee 2007) that is reflected in the town planning, architecture and heritage.



participants found a number of students freely expressing their opinions, sharing their ideas and raising their concerns. Given that the artwork ignited students' interaction with relevant social issues means that it could also play a role to enhance relational capabilities, inventiveness, problem-solving and zeal for living

A well-rounded individual knows that they belong and that they are vessels that include and welcome others. We should understand that we are all connected. Participants related the unique inclusivity of the artwork to the manner that individuals contribute to their communities in differing ways. Unfortunately, numerous students experience more separateness than togetherness. This trend is probably due to the absence of spiritual anchors in students' lives rather than a lack of trying on the side of the university. It is also possible that my artwork negotiated the public domain on campus with other conflicting hidden curricula operating simultaneously. Perpetual stereotyping, cultural history, and compartmentalised views of education are other voices in public that convey another message about belonging. The influence of this kind of public art rests less on cognitive transmission than on creating lived experiences of metaphorical ideas.

Citizenship as a collection of communal principles still prevailed as overarching definition despite the fact that participants had different understandings of the concept. An engaged citizen is a graduate who performs a leadership role in society through their contribution and service. According to the participants, the artwork communicated that people are willing and open to getting involved. I deducted from participants' interchangeable use of knowing and doing that participation in an artwork activates necessary thought patterns that can lead to active and responsible contributions. I found that students are not entitled to freely receive, but need to make the choice to be good citizens. The responses to the artwork indicate that students' personal and intellectual growth can be stimulated by art education in the expanded field in service of higher education institutions.

# CHAPTER 6

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## CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Suspended between educational culture and student culture, and between contemporary art and relational art, I developed an interest for the space in-between; a courageous curiosity to explore the questions and possibilities that arise at the intersection of these fields. I determined to discover possibilities for the transformative role of higher education institutions to be supported by art education in the expanded field. This was done by exploring the nature and effect of students' responses to an interactive public artwork placed on Stellenbosch University campus and what their feedback communicated about the particularity of the Stellenbosch University context. With this qualitative case study I delved in by means of individual and group interviews, analysed according to the inductive content analysis. Moreover this method allowed me to comfortably navigate an intriguing interdisciplinary landscape and sensitively pick up on nuanced information. Although literature and policy documents from various fields were surveyed, the aims of this study were specifically limited to the educational capacity of art on Stellenbosch University campus. The research findings are not promoted as generally applicable due to the contextually contingent nature of my research field. These boundaries are underpinned by the values of the anti-colonial prism that advantages indigenous dynamic knowledge and rejects universality.

### Factual and Interpretative Conclusions and Implications

I resolved to gather a wide range of both agreeable and contradictory opinions and responses. Some passers-by apparently wanted to maximise the artwork because they were visually drawn to it; yet for others it may have been too simple to make an impression. Nevertheless, these kinds of visual metaphors translate philosophical ideas into practice and access the subconscious in a more immediate way. It is thus this capacity that leads artists into sectors of government and teaching. This relates to the university's perceived role to equip students to become functional citizens by bridging the

divide between in- and out-of-class experiences. Participants' understandings of the role of Stellenbosch University and the obstacles it is facing revealed key features that shape the particularity of the Stellenbosch University context. Transformation on campus is described as a wave, but obstructed by the fact that some departments are very detached from the university's vision and the demographics that Stellenbosch represents. Stakeholders at the university also need to transcend how they think so that a greater social impact can be made by the university.

According to participants, the university should instil the life skill of opinion-forming so that people can learn to deal with other people's points of view and maybe alter theirs in positive ways. The artwork was regarded a safe space where expression, sharing ideas and raising concerns could take place. They also acknowledged that the artwork sparked students' interaction with a relevant social issue. Despite the fact that a few participants described their peers as ignorant and apathetic, most concluded that we all need to start taking up responsibility for causes on behalf of others. This is because we are all weaved together in a community and students need to feel a sense of pride and belonging before they can excel in higher education. The finished artwork communicated that people are open to getting involved and doing something, which is remarkable because we are not just here entitled to receive and be serviced. Our citizenship requires of us to contribute in a positive manner to society. Participants associated the unique way in which people could participate in the artwork with the distinctive contributions that individuals make in their communities.

## Conceptual Conclusions and Implications

The factual findings from the interviews were interpreted as concepts in conversation with the contextual and theoretical frameworks discussed in this thesis. From the pervasive positive feedback, it seems that the artwork engendered notions of freedom and liberty which, despite negative remarks, made this a successful risk with intangible reach. It provided a visual illustration of diverse opinions and expanded the understanding of art on campus. Art can be used to teach in other ways than standard curricula by guiding students' thoughts and conversations. Participants found the artwork a worthwhile teaching apparatus that related the complexity of democracy, tolerance, human rights,

diversity and social justice in ways that were unexpected, subtle, practical and accessible. An expanded understanding of education is necessary to achieve the graduate attributes and strategic priorities that the university strives for. It sounds as if support departments of services are currently greater vehicles of this type of education, because interdisciplinary learning is strengthened where diverse perspectives and social backgrounds converge. The university's negotiation between its colonial heritage and national socio-economic challenges decelerates the process of transformation that propels both the university and its students into novel and potentially beneficial ways of thinking.

Honest spaces for candid conversations need to be created where people can articulate their opinions, pass on their ideas and expose their fears. Artworks with a relational purpose should thus aim to create these kinds of spaces. Sensitive issues may be increasingly discussed informally after they have been laid bare in facilitated discussions. This is a crucial step for the university to enable students to dwell on and develop empathy toward societal needs. From the feedback, it seems that the artwork alluded to this preparation for communal life among diverse groups of people, but although we theoretically agree to coexist, a sense of belonging exposes the lived-reality of that notion. There are those who experience belonging, and those who do not, and the university tirelessly works toward greater inclusivity. That is where public art can play a vital role to create lived experiences of the philosophical concepts that the university seeks to instil in students. Stellenbosch University would like students to become thought leaders who contribute by meaningful action, as well as by actively exemplifying a positive and hopeful attitude. It appears as though my artwork served that vision and strengthened those priorities along with a range of other collaborators that each contributes a simple, but collectively powerful function. The feedback suggests that art education in the expanded field can aid higher education institutions in bringing about personal and intellectual growth in the lives of their students.

## My Contribution, Possible Further Research and Critiques

In the Stellenbosch University context I anticipate that my study may strengthen what the policy-writers have in mind for the future of higher education, but probably with a different angle than they envisioned. I hope that this research on art education in the expanded

field will lead to art being employed as a vessel to communicate the university vision, address students' empathy and achieve the graduate attributes that they desire. There are some practical leaps that would need to be taken in order for such artworks to be effectual. More students need to be exposed to platforms where they can be immersed in critical conversations, gain confidence to share their opinions, be open to unexpected sources of learning and relate their education to their future roles in society. Lecturers also need to expand their understanding of education, value out-of-class learning to a greater extent, and see their curriculums as part of a complex education system that collaborates with other learning experiences on campus. Lastly, the university needs take a more directed approach to making their institutional values known to all role-players on campus. Their vision of innovation, thought leadership, and inclusivity should become an intuitive part of every student, lecturer and staff-member.

On a larger scale I expect my research to add to the existing body of knowledge surrounding anti-colonial perspectives on higher education as well as possibilities of art as a medium for enhancing transformation at universities. My research may be critiqued on the specificity of my case study or based on the number of interview participants. Further research could focus on a follow-up study with the same intervention in order to see the critical maturing of the campus. A comparative study between various universities can also be meaningful to grasp nuances between students on different campuses. I would like to further my studies in this field, moving out of higher education institutions and into general life-skills education because I value inter-generational learning and mentorship. Few South Africans have access to higher education, but many South Africans in different positions can benefit from the transformative impact of exposure to art and creativity. In future I would like to delve deeper into the potential of art and creative interventions to enhance life coaching and potential development.

From my perspective, however, life is about each individual. And if this artwork was able to get one Stellenbosch newcomer to say "this is our country, this is our university; this is where we grow, where we learn, where we make friends, We Belong Here", then that is enough for me. That could possibly have a ripple effect.

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# ADDENDUM A: Information about the research

**NAME AND CONTACT NUMBER OF RESEARCHER** Anika van der Westhuijzen

University of Stellenbosch, Tel.: 0845046788; Email: anikvdw@live.com

**TITLE OF RESEARCH** Exploring the scope for art education in the expanded field to benefit the transformative process of higher education

<b>PURPOSE OF RESEARCH</b>
To explore perceptions and attitudes regarding an art intervention on campus in celebration of 20 Years of Freedom & Democracy
<b>AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH</b>
<p>The aim of this study is to determine how interactive educational artworks could contribute to realising the university's institutional vision and transformational mandate</p> <p><b>In this study my primary question is:</b></p> <p>What is the nature and effect of students' responses to the art intervention?</p> <p><b>The sub-questions are:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do these responses communicate about the particularity of the Stellenbosch university context?</li> <li>• How can art education in the expanded field aid higher education institutions in fulfilling their transformative role?</li> </ul> <p><b>Aims and Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The objectives are:</li> <li>• To identify the reactions of students to the art intervention that I placed on campus.</li> <li>• To establish what the reactions revealed about the particularity of the Stellenbosch University context, the potential of art in the expanded field and students' perceptions of citizenship in south Africa.</li> </ul>
<b>ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY</b>
<p><b>Participation in the research is voluntary.</b> You are free to participate in this study or to withdraw from it at any point. Your decision as to whether or not to participate in this study will have no influence on your present or future status at Stellenbosch University.</p>
<b>INTERVIEW: INDIVIDUAL OR GROUP</b>

<b>Person/s interviewed</b>	
<b>Date</b>	
<b>Place</b>	
<b>Duration</b>	
<b>INTERVIEW CONTENT</b>	
<p>1. Introduction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain objectives of the interview and explain what topic areas will be addressed</li> <li>• Explanation of the potential value of the research as to how the information will be used for the benefit of students, lecturers and communities</li> <li>• Give an indication of the expected length of the interview</li> </ul>	
<p>2. List of topics regarding the art intervention</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First impressions of the project</li> <li>• Reactions of students &amp; staff</li> <li>• Perceived vision of the university</li> <li>• Democracy on campus</li> <li>• South African citizenship</li> </ul>	
<p>3. Closing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summarise the main issues discussed</li> <li>• Discuss the next course of action to be taken, such as a possible follow-up interview</li> <li>• Invite participants to reflect on what they have said and encourage them to contact the researcher if they want to add or adjust any of their comments made during the interview</li> <li>• Thank the participant for his or her time</li> </ul>	

## ADDENDUM B: Consent Form



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### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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#### Consent form for Stellenbosch University students and lecturers

**Title of study:** Exploring the scope for art education in the expanded field to benefit the transformative process of higher education

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Anika van der Westhuijzen, for a Masters in Art Education at the Visual Arts Department at Stellenbosch University.

- Selection

Selection of research participant was done through non-purposive judgement sampling. You were selected as a possible participant in this study because of your availability and willingness to participate.

#### 1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The aim of this study is to determine how interactive educational artworks could contribute to realising the university's institutional vision and transformational mandate.

#### 2. PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following things:

Participate in group discussions as well as a possible individual interview about your experience of the 20 years of Democracy art intervention, your experience at Stellenbosch University and your understanding of democracy and citizenship on campus.

Individual and group interviews will take 60 – 90 minutes. There might be a follow-up session for discussions or interviews, which will take about 60 minutes.

Interviews will take place in a private space that the participant prefers.

### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

I do not anticipate that the nature of the questions or interview situations could have caused any physical or emotional harm or discomfort to the participants.

### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

Participants will not benefit from the participation.

### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

Participants will not receive payment for participating.

### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you as participant will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of keeping all written notes and voice recordings safe in a locked drawer in my house. I am the only person who has access to the keys for the drawer. Any participant may request to look at the notes or listen to the voice recordings of their individual contributions at any stage. Participants may review or edit any information mentioned in interviews or observation sessions.

Results will be reported in the Masters study, but any student or lecturer may decide to edit or review their comments at any time before it is published. The publishing date will be made available to all participants and a suitable time frame will be allowed for responses. Information will be erased when the Masters study is published.

The students and lecturers who contribute to the research will be briefed, and their participation is voluntary.

To protect the identities of participants, I will not reveal any names. The information provided by students and lecturers will be kept confidential.

## **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You may choose whether to participate in this study or not. If you volunteer to be a part of this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and still remain part of the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so.

## **8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the researcher, Anika van der Westhuijzen, at 0845046788, Postgraduate and International Office, Victoria Street, Stellenbosch; or the supervisor, Dr. E. Costandius, at 0825109790 or at work 021 8083053, Visual Arts Department office 2023, Victoria Street, Stellenbosch.

## **9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT

The information above was described to me by Anika van der Westhuijzen in English and I am in command of this language. I was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study.

I have been given a copy of this form.

---

Name of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Participant

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the participant] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [name of the representative]. [He/she] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in English and no translator was used.

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Investigator

\_\_\_\_\_